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From Pressure to Participation: The Role of Queensland Shelter.

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Abstract

Political support for the inclusion of social policy advocacy groups in the development of public policy is underpinned by a broad belief in the right of citizens to participate in or at least contribute to government decision making. Governments and state agencies consult widely on social issues when they see accountability and transparency as politically attractive, a form of both useful advice and risk management. While scholars have theorised on the benefits of non-state participation, empirical research on the role of policy advocacy groups in the development of Australian public policy is limited. This thesis examines the role of Queensland Shelter Inc., a state based social housing policy peak, in the development of Queensland social housing policy (1987-2012). While consultation processes are open and inclusive of a wide range of stakeholders, participation remains restricted to a select few. Why are some interest groups able to directly participate in the development of public policy while others are only consulted or even ignored?

The influence of Queensland Shelter over housing policy has fluctuated over its twenty-five year history. Three factors were examined in relation to this oscillation: the organisational capacity of Queensland Shelter, the willingness of the housing ministry to engage and the broader political context. While the main focus of the study is to assess and analyse shifts in the relationship between Queensland Shelter and the state housing ministry, attention is also given to the connections between Queensland Shelter and other stakeholders, including the bureaucracy, other policy advocacy groups and the Australian federal government. These connections were found to be important factors in the ability to develop close working relationships with decision makers.

Shelter's changing role and its capacity to participate in the development of social housing policy are examined through documents and semi-structured interviews with former politicians, senior public servants, Shelter staff and board members, and other key players within the Queensland social housing sector. Throughout the period covered in this research, the Queensland housing ministry remained in a position of authority, at times enabling Queensland Shelter to participate and at other times shutting them out. While the capacity of Queensland Shelter to provide policy advice has expanded over the past twenty-five years, the willingness of the state housing ministry to engage with this organisation continues to wax and wane, a product of both the minister at the time and the overall approach of the political party in power.

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Publications during candidature

Peer-reviewed articles

Stanley, Maree. "Jacaranda." *Queensland Historical Atlas*

<http://www.qhatlas.com.au/jacaranda>, 2013.

Miller, Danielle and Maree Stanley. "Interviewing the interviewers: difference, knowledge sharing, and cohesion within the Queensland speaks interviewing team." *The Oral History Review* 39, no. 1 (2012): 61-82.

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interest group politics, interest group typology, Queensland politics, Queensland Shelter, social housing, oral history, Queensland government, not-for-profit sector, non-state participation

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Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations	xii
Introduction	1
Chapter One: Persuading government: pressure to advocacy	13
Chapter Two: Insider typology: why insider status remains a privileged position.....	33
Chapter Three: Study of Shelter: voluntary outfit to policy peak	51
Chapter Four: Casting a shadow of disadvantage across the sunshine state.....	89
Chapter Five: A brick wall: Shelter on the outside (1987-89).....	101
Chapter Six: An open door: Shelter and the Goss Government (1989-96).....	111
Chapter Seven: On the periphery (1996-98).....	123
Chapter Eight: Shelter on the inside (1998-07).....	143
Chapter Nine: The voice of reason: from inside to outside (2007-12).....	171
Conclusion	189
Postscript: Capture	199
Bibliography	203
Appendix A: Interviews conducted by the author	245
Appendix B: Queensland housing portfolios since 1968-2010.....	247

Figures

Figure 1: Proportion of public housing applicants waiting more than 2 Years at June 30 1995	128
Figure 2: Funds received from the Borbidge Government (1996-98).....	139
Figure 3: Annual addition of housing stock: Aboriginal and Torres Strait housing, public housing and community housing (1990-1999).....	153
Figure 4: Content analysis: Shelter media releases 2004-09.....	167
Figure 5: Annual income received by Queensland Shelter in 1996	168
Figure 6: Annual income received by Queensland Shelter in 2006	169

Illustrations

Illustration 1: A typology of pressure groups	34
Illustration 2: The policy cycle	42
Illustration 3: Revised interest group typology	43
Illustration 4: Sussex Street squat, West End Queensland.....	70
Illustration 5: Excerpt from Shelter Committee minutes 12 June 1990	73
Illustration 6: Shelter correspondence, cover page.....	74
Illustration 7: Shelter Offices 515 Wickham Terrace Spring Hill.....	83
Illustration 8: Excerpt: service agreement between Department of Communities and Queensland Shelter	84
Illustration 9: Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (1969). Illustration source: Wilcox 1998	132
Illustration 10: Excerpt: inaugural Senior Mangers/Peaks forum	150
Illustration 11: Excerpt: a guide to the Brisbane Housing Company	157
Illustration 12: Excerpt: letter to Queensland public housing tenants.....	183

Tables

Table 1: Consultation objectives and instruments.....	23
Table 2: Australian Compacts.....	27
Table 3: Categorisation of influence strategies and examples of activities	37
Table 4: Three tiers of engagement.....	40
Table 5: Primary, secondary and tertiary sources used within this research	63
Table 6: Increases in Shelter income (2008/09)	82
Table 7: Increases in Shelter expenses (2008/09).....	82
Table 8: Roles of board management.....	86
Table 9: Shelter status in relation to political party in power	186
Table 10: Queensland Shelter activity in Queensland (1980s-2000s)	190
Table 11: Revised interest group typology	191

List of Abbreviations

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ACOSS	Australian Council of Social Services
AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
AJPH	Australian Journal of Political History
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ANU	Australian National University
ARC	Australian Research Council
AWI	Australian Wool Innovation
BCC	Brisbane City Council
BHC	Brisbane Housing Company
CBD	Central Business District
CGQ	Centre for the Government of Queensland
CJC	Criminal Justice Commission
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CSHA	Commonwealth State Housing Agreement
CSS	Community Services Sector
DG	Director-General
DoH	Department of Housing
FY	Financial Year
GST	Goods and Services Tax

HIA	Housing Industry Association
IMDB	Internet Movie Database
JVs	Joint Ventures
LRS	Lobbyists Registration Scheme
LNP	Liberal National Party
LP	Liberal Party
MRRT	Mineral Resource Rent Tax
ND	No date
NFP	Not-for-profit
NPM	New Public Management
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NRAS	National Rental Affordability Scheme
PACT	Policy and Communication Team
PETA	People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
PHC	Priority Housing Committee
PPPs	Private Public Partnerships
PSMC	Public Service Management Commission
QCOS	Queensland Council of Social Services
QLD	Queensland
QUT	Queensland University of Technology
RBA	Rental Bond Authority

REIQ	Real Estate Institute of Queensland
SA	South Australia
SHAQ	Shape of Housing Assistance in Queensland
Shelter	Queensland Shelter Inc.
SSDA	Social Studies Data Association
TAAS	Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service
TAS	Tasmania
TUQ	Tenants' Union of Queensland
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
WA	Western Australia

Introduction

Governments encourage the participation of some not-for-profit interest groups, offering direct financial support and a willingness to listen to policy advice. The impact of this, however, on the ability of an organisation to participate in policy development varies greatly. Formal recognition by government is only part of the story – informal discussions around ideas and issues are as important to the development of public policy as official processes. Interest groups with close relationships with governments are able to work around the ‘edges’¹ of decision making. These edges represent ongoing discussions and relationships between an interest group and government stakeholders: understanding these is just as important as knowledge of the formal aspects of policy reform. Informal discussions occur throughout policy development, from defining the problem through to implementation.

This thesis examines the role of Queensland Shelter Inc.² in the development of social housing policy³ in Queensland over a twenty-five year period (1987-2012). Over this period, Shelter evolved from a grassroots community organisation to an almost fully government funded social housing advocacy peak. In this same time period, successive Queensland governments have played a major role in developing the community housing sector, not least because they wanted to retreat from the Housing Commission model where the government built the accommodation and then acted as landlord. This thesis explores the relationship between the state Department of Housing in Queensland⁴ and Queensland Shelter.

¹ Former chair of Queensland Shelter and long-standing community advocate Eleri Morgan-Thomas referred to ‘tinkering around the edges’ when describing incremental policy adjustment during her interview. The edges of policy making could also be used to describe informal discussions surrounding a policy issue (Morgan-Thomas 2013 interview by the author).

² Within thesis herein referred to as Shelter.

³ Social housing policy is defined as policy which concerns the provision and supply of “...accommodation managed on a non-profit basis and provided or subsidised by government in order to meet social aims. It is provided primarily for low-income earners ...” (Shelter 2002).

⁴ The name of the actual department responsible for social housing changes often, representing various couplings with other state functions. See appendix B.

Queensland Shelter is a not-for-profit policy peak advocating to improve access to safe and secure housing for all Queenslanders, while recognising that “Our funding mandate and social justice framework puts particular focus on the interests of low and moderate income housing consumers in Queensland” (Carson 2011: 8). Shelter is managed by a volunteer committee, which is elected at each Annual General Meeting. The Committee, or Board has it has been known in recent years is responsible for the strategic direction and the executive which oversees Shelter’s financial responsibilities. Membership consists of individual members and organisations.

Theoretical framework

An adaptation of Wyn Grant’s pressure group typology (published in *Pressure Groups, Politics and Democracy in Britain*, 1989) is used as an analytical framework for analysing the variances which have occurred within the relationship between the government of the day and Shelter. Over the thirty or so years since Grant’s typology was first published, the pressure group literature has become dominated by examination of pressure groups⁵ as members of policy networks.

The Marsh and Rhodes (1992) typology of networks is widely employed by public policy scholars to distinguish between types of policy networks. The typology arranges these networks on a spectrum ranging from issue network at one end to policy community at the other. An issue network has fluctuating participation, a high level of conflict and may include members who lack power and resources (Marsh & Rhodes 1992). In contrast a policy community is characterised as having limited membership, frequent interaction between all members and cohesion in values and ideology across membership (Marsh & Rhodes 1992). In a policy community each of the members have resources that are valuable to other members of the network. In other words, each participant of the policy community will bring something to the table that other members of the community need or at least find useful. This has led some scholars to argue that policy communities emerge without the agency of government, with inclusion due to the resources held by each organisation rather than state permission:

⁵ Within this thesis I use pressure groups and interest groups interchangeably but provide an historical perspective on the vernacular in chapter one.

Government cannot be characterised as the central all-commanding actor who unilaterally - irrespective of the resources which groups possess - decides who gain access ... Such a perspective denies the validity of what we believe ... to be the currency for exchange-based behaviour within closed policy making arenas ... (Maloney 1994: 23).

Within the social housing sector there are many examples of issue networks and policy communities – but the network typology does not account for the role that the state plays within the welfare sector in enabling some organisations to develop greater capacity (and resources) in order to participate in policy communities. This is not to suggest that community organisations are without agency. Community groups work hard to develop skills and strategies in order to gain funding and recognition from governments. Recognition may come in the form of funding which will enable sustainable growth – capacity to provide advice, represent members and participate in policy.

This research does not seek to challenge the importance of studying policy networks. Instead I argue that the relationship between the state and interest groups within the Queensland social housing sector should be studied to determine whether an interest group will be able to access a policy sub-system, such as a policy community. Governments retain the authority to regulate the invitation list for policy networks. In the community sector, many organisations are reliant on government for funds, thus they are in competition for the attention of government. Attention comes in various forms and includes direct funding and/or having the ‘ear’ of decision makers to being open to listening to advice. This is not to suggest a negative view of the role of the state – governments are compelled to play favourites within a representative system of democracy.

The role of state arbitration is referred to by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (1995) as the “ugliness of democracy”. Choosing between competing interests creates winners and losers. Decision makers are routinely faced with very difficult choices – deciding, for example whether to increase funds for a program for housing for those with a disability or providing additional crisis accommodation for those escaping a family violence situation. Some governments are experimenting with participatory democracy in which there is opportunity for citizen deliberation and consensus. Examples of these, however, remain rare and are usually issue specific rather than broad bush attempts at reforming the way in which public decisions are made. Consensus is difficult and time consuming – governments instead aim for acceptance. One way of gaining the public’s acceptance is to consult with community

groups during a 'consultation' and/or during the implementation phase. In recent decades peak advocacy groups have emerged within the social sector to work more closely with governments on policy development. Studying the role of advocacy groups is particularly relevant to the issue of democracy because "Professionalized (sic) non-profits often have a disproportionate ability to speak on the behalf of others, shaping public understandings of social problems and advocating for preferred solutions" (Dempsey 2011: 149). Peaks have the capacity to strengthen democracy by enabling the participation of citizens provided they are representative of a broad membership. Governments are accountable for the decisions they make regarding the funding of peak advocacy groups. As Hancock observed:

"... perhaps more significant from the democratic point of view was the fact that politicians could decide which groups were to be recognised as peak bodies, how much funding they would receive, whether this funding would be withdrawn, and whether this power would be in fact be used by politicians to stifle outside voices ..."
(Hancock 2006: 53).

In this thesis I spend time distinguishing between interest groups which are enabled to participate and those that are not: the rhetoric of community consultation should not be confused with an open door for all. Since the election of the Goss government in 1989 successive state governments in Queensland have taken more interest in the views of welfare groups than prior conservative governments. The level of this inclusion varies, depending on the issue, capacity of the interest group and government of the day. Change to the relationship between governments and peak groups are mostly incremental, with punctuations following political elections and/or bursts of radical policy change such as funding reviews. In this thesis I use these punctuations as pauses within the narrative: the case study chapters are organised into political eras. Without exception, when there was a change in the governing party there was also a change to the level in which Shelter was able to participate. The thesis uses evidence of formal permission (for example government funding, inclusion in regular meetings, policy network membership) as a starting point for examining the relationship between Shelter and successive state housing ministries. In addition to policy documentation, the use of oral history has enabled a much greater understanding of the role of Shelter in the development of social housing policy, providing insights into informal policy discussion which underpin formal decision making.

My interest in studying the specific relationships between interest groups and the governments that fund them evolved during an earlier study I had conducted for a Masters

Research project. Before embarking on this PhD study, I completed a short research project as part of a postgraduate program in governance and public policy at the University of Queensland. Early in the course Stephen Bell, who was in the process of writing a book, *Reinventing Governance: the Centrality of the State* posed a challenge to the student cohort: could any of us provide an example of non-governmental governance? In his book, he argued with his co-author Andrew Hindmoor, that while neo-liberal governments had increasingly developed “strategic relationships with a range of non-state actors” this had enhanced their capacity to govern rather than weakened it (Bell & Hindmoor 2009: 2). I became aware of a radical decision by a policy network of sheep farmers and industry representatives to phase out a long held Australian farming practice and for my final research project I examined this decision as a possible rare example of a public policy decision made by non-state actors.

In 2004 the Australian Sheep and Industry Taskforce announced that sheep mulesing in Australia would be phased out by 2010. There did not appear to be any government involvement, rather the Australian wool and sheep sector had formed a taskforce to respond to the threat of international retailers boycotting Australian Wool. The taskforce was led by Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), who are responsible for research and development into the wool industry. AWI is a not-for-profit organisation, formed by the Australian government and funded through a statutory funding agreement, governed by a board of directors. In order to demonstrate a case of decision making by a non-state actor I needed to establish the autonomy of AWI from the state. This proved more difficult to establish than anticipated.

While the government was not technically involved in the decision to phase out sheep mulesing, it remained in a position of authority. AWI promoted its self-determination, stating on its website that it was a fully independent “public company limited by shares and owned by Australian woolgrowers” (AWI 2011). But an examination of the legislation (Wool Services Privatisation Act 2000) reveals that the federal government retains a great deal of authority over this organisation. The Australian Government regulates the activities of AWI through the statutory funding agreement: “Accountability mechanisms are in place so that the Commonwealth can be satisfied that the company is using the money appropriately for the benefit of wool growers” (Australian Government 2004: ix). Analysis of the documentation regarding the governance of AWI, revealed that the decision to phase out sheep mulesing was not an example of non-state governance because had the government wished to intervene in the decision they retained the power to do so. Thus I concluded that the decision

to phase out sheep mulesing had not occurred without the agency of the Australian government. While initially disappointed that I had not uncovered a rare example of non-state decision making, the project inspired inquiry into the role of interest groups in public decision making and the methods of research that could be used to examine the impact and participation of interest groups. I became interested in the separation between a fully funded interest group and the government that funded it – how does a group remain autonomous from government when funded by state money? Without autonomy an interest group is at risk of being captured, no longer able to represent the interests of its membership.

Participation, Power and Influence

One of the reasons there is limited study of interest groups is because the influence of groups is inherently difficult to measure. Throughout this thesis I equate active participation with the opportunity to influence. During each of the core chapters I describe the interaction between Shelter and the government of the day in relation to its relationship with government, attempting to assess what influence Shelter asserted. My own understanding of power and influence has been guided by the community power literature. Lukes' (2005) seminal work on power, provides a critique of previous work within this field, arguing that there are three "faces" of power. The power of the ruling elite as evidenced by decisions made, the power to set the political agenda and the power to set preferences. A short discussion of the three faces of power is included in this introduction because it provides the context for the importance of studying formal and informal interaction between Shelter and the government of the day. My evidence for agenda and preference setting draws heavily on interviews conducted for this thesis.

Early studies into public policy decision making were based on the assumption that power was held by the ruling elite. A renowned example is Floyd Hunter's 1953 research, in which he attempted to 'locate' power within an American city, which was referred to within the study as 'Regional City'. Hunter studied the decisions made with the assumption that these decisions were made by the leaders. "It was taken as axiomatic that community life is organized (sic) and that persons occupying "offices" and public positions of trust would be involved in some manner in the power relations of the community" (Hunter 1953: 263). Once he had identified the community leaders, Hunter used structured interviews to examine who had the power to make decisions (Hunter 1953: 7).

The concept of elite decision makers was challenged by pluralists. Dahl (1961) approached his community power study with the assumption that western democratic governments had moved from “oligarchy to pluralism”. Rather than assume, as Hunter had done, that leaders were a “ruling elite” he argued that they may well be “captives of their constituents” (Dahl 1961: 89). Dahl even went so far as to argue that “It is theoretically possible, of course that ‘real decision-makers’ differed from the official decision-makers ...” (1961: 11). He studied the city of New Haven in Connecticut for several years to determine who had the authority to make decisions. Like Hunter, Dahl studied the decisions made, choosing three areas of public policy: public education, urban redevelopment and aspects of the electoral process. In both Hunter’s and Dahl’s research, power was a study of who wins and who loses (Lukes 1974: 18). The first dimension (or adopting Lukes’ vernacular, face of power) involves the study of the decisions, and the overt conflict that occurred in the lead up to that decision.

An important critique of community power studies was undertaken by Bachrach & Baratz (1963) who contended that power was not only located in the decisions made but also in non-decisions. Dahl (1961) had also raised the issue of non-decisions in his publication, *Who Governs?* “If a party politician sees no payoff, his (sic) interest is likely to be small; if he foresees an adverse effect, he will avoid the issue if he can” (Dahl 1961: 93). Bachrach & Baratz, however, made much more of the issue of avoidance and argued that preventing certain issues from being discussed was as important as the study of decisions made. Powerful entities could in fact keep certain ideas or issues off the political agenda. Bachrach & Baratz (1963) argued that this was the second dimension of power and that the scrutiny of non-decisions was just as important to the study of power as that of decisions. Hogwood (1992: 5) likens the choice to study decisions in the absence of other contexts to “the story of the drunk man searching for his keys under a lamppost – not because they are likely to be there, but because there is more light” (cited in Cairney 2012: 61-62). Examining non-decision making is more difficult, but interests that did not make it onto the political agenda can be observable through the study of “policy preference or grievances” (Lukes 1974).

For Bachrach and Baratz (1963) conflict remained a necessary component of power as without conflict there was no need to exert power. Bachrach and Baratz’s definition of power includes an implicit understanding of both the first and second dimension of power: “A achieves B’s compliance using overt or tacit threats” (Cairney 2012: 49). While some authors use the words power and influence interchangeably, (Baldwin 1980, Kerbo & McKinstry 1995 cited in Zimmerling 2005: 97, Barry & Watson 1996 cited in Krause and

Kearney 2006), influence is described as where “One person has *influence* over another within a given scope to the extent that the first, without resorting to either a tacit or an overt threat of severe deprivations, caused the second to change his (sic) course of action” (Bachrach and Baratz 1963: 637 emphasis in original). In practical terms influence is defined as “the ability to change, direct, or affect the behaviour of others without ordering or threatening them” (Harvard Business School 2006: 62).

The power to influence the policy agenda can be as important as the power to make decisions. Matthew Crenson (1971) was one of the first scholars to study non-decisions empirically, in his study of air pollution in two cities in the United States. The premise of his study was to query why air pollution was ignored in some places and dealt with in others. He applied his interpretation of the ideas of Bachrach and Baratz (1970) and Schattschneider (1960) to his study. Schattschneider had already noted that political debaters express “bias in favour of the exploitations of some kinds of conflicts and the suppression of others because *organization is the mobilization (sic) of bias*” (Schattschneider 1960 cited in Crenson 1971: 23 italics in original). Crenson’s 1971 study encountered the methodological challenge of studying what had not occurred. He addressed this issue by comparing two cities: why did some cities tackle air pollution while others managed to avoid any discussion? Using Dahl’s (1979) definition, he argued that power means that “A can get B to do things that B would not otherwise do. The critical step in the analysis of power is therefore to find out what B would ordinarily do” (Crenson 1971: 33). In his comparative study he was able to theorise on what B would ordinarily do by observing a similar town with similar air pollution problems. Rather than employing a comparative study between organisations, I have examined the preferences of Shelter and analysed whether these were given consideration by the state government. I have spoken with former Shelter staff and other government and non-government actors to determine whether Shelter were able to persuade the state government to include certain items on the policy agenda. The second dimension requires the study of preferences: what, for example, did Shelter choose to put forward? What preferences or policy positions were excluded by decision makers? How did Shelter shape the policy agenda? With the knowledge that the Minister for Housing is not the sole decider, a peak advocacy group would benefit from a broader target than just the Department of Housing but this requires resources that a smaller outfit may not have available. Peak policy groups may also empower the minister with evidence and knowledge so that he or she can act as a “policy entrepreneur” (Kingdon 1984: 129) within Cabinet or to other decision makers such as the Queensland Treasury.

In 1975 Steven Lukes (1974) published a critique of the first and second dimensions of power, *Power: A Radical View*.⁶ His main critique of Bachrach & Baratz (1963) was that conflict need not be observed in order for power to be present. Lukes (2005) argued that power could be expressed without conflict by controlling the preferences of other parties:

... A may exercise power over B by getting him (sic) to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping or determining his very wants. Indeed, is it not the supreme exercise of power to get another or others to have the desires you want them to have - that is, to secure their compliance by controlling their thoughts and desires? (Lukes 2005: 27 emphasis in original).

Lukes identified that the power to control preferences was the third 'face' of power and related this to the role of dominant ideas and broader ideologies within public policy making (Cairney 2012: 220). The ability of Shelter to persuade the government, as well as other members of the housing sector, to implement certain ideas is emphasised within this study. Ideas as well as an understanding of the practical and political implications of prospective policy interventions are important to peak organisations as they often rely on this knowledge to influence decision makers.

The Study of Peak Advocacy Groups

The establishment of peak advocacy groups has occurred in other parts of the world with terms such as "intermediaries, resource/umbrella groups, trade associations, coalitions, federations and advocacy organisations ..." (Melville 1999a: 2) used to describe such groups.

By 2007 Australia had the highest percentage of social services provided by the not-for-profit sector, higher than:

... almost any other country, with the sector turning over \$100 billion a year – more than the revenue of BHP Billiton (at \$66 billion) or Telstra, News Corp and the Commonwealth Bank combined (together, about \$80 billion) (Dalton 2013).

In 2010 the Australian Government Productivity Commission published findings on the contributions made by the sector and recommendations on further government intervention which would "enhance its effectiveness and achieve even better outcomes for the

⁶ Republished in 2005 with additional chapters.

community” (Australian Government 2010: iii). The Productivity Commission noted that while historically the sector was involved primarily in the delivery of social goods and services, the sector had also become increasingly involved in “raising awareness of social and environmental issues” which the commission attributed to “increasing involvement in the delivery of government funded services” (Australian Government 2010: 2). Peak bodies were established to provide a unified voice to governments, negating some of the complexity involved with dealing with a wide range of disparate interests within a sector.

Research into Australian peak bodies has focussed on the relationship between the peak and the government (see May 1996, Sawyer and Jupp 1996, Sawyer 2002 and Melville 1999 cited in Cheverton 2005). The majority of these studies, however, are point-in-time studies, employing large survey data in order to critique the relationship between peaks and the governments that fund them. Few Australian studies have provided an historical analysis of the development of interest groups and their relationship to government, focussing on how and why they try and influence, and assessing when they are and are not successful.

In addition, Philip Mendes’ publication *Inside the Welfare Lobby* (2006) examines the work of the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) between 1955 and 2006. Mendes’ study examines the organisation in light of its strategies, dynamic relationship with the major Australian political parties, internal ideological conflict and influence over the period. This is a much broader study of an interest group than research undertaken in this thesis, which has concentrated on the relationship with governments in power over a twenty-five year period.

University of Queensland academic Dr Rose Melville has contributed to the limited “theoretical and empirical literature” on policy peaks in Australia (Melville 2003: 95) through “two ARC Small research grants conducted between 1997 and 1999 (including a pilot study of 24 peaks) and a three-year ARC Discovery grant (200-2002) (Melville 2003:2006). These studies employed mixed methods, including large scale survey research and in depth interviews⁷. These methods enabled the development of baseline data, which will assist researchers to compare the experiences and strategies of multiple community sector peaks. Survey research was not possible due to resource constraints, but this study contributes to

⁷ Melville (2006) notes that “Important lessons about survey design were learnt during the pilot study (1998) which were then applied to the three-year ARC study” (2006: 102).

the study of peaks by analysing Shelter's relationship with successive Queensland governments and the organisation's contribution to public policy development.

Halpin (2004) provides a historical account of interest group representation within the Australian agricultural sector. Halpin (2004) identifies several phases of rural representation over the course of Australian history: primary producer groups interests, political parties and peak groups. Halpin argues that three perspectives are required in order to study the evolution of interest groups: "... the pattern of social interaction, economic conditions and the prevailing political process in catalysing transitions between "phases of representation" (Halpin 2004: 469). The willingness of the government of the day to work with interest groups is referred to as the *Political Opportunity Structure*. As Eisinger 1973 writes:

The manner in which individuals and groups in the political system behave, then, is not simply a function of the resources they command but of the openings, weak spots, barriers, and resources of the political system itself (1973: 12).

An understanding of the political climate, the willingness of the ministry to listen to advocacy, the historical relationship between Shelter and members of the government of the day and the state bureaucracy have been imperative to analysis within this thesis. In a review of the state of research on interest groups in the European Union and America, Beyers, Eising and Maloney (2008) argue that:

A more explicit and thorough linkage of interest group politics with the overall structure of conflict in a polity seems crucial in order to better understand the role of advocates in a broader political context (2008: 119).

Each of the narratives included within the thesis includes discussion on the political and economic environment. Grant (1989: 128) noted that "It must be emphasised that two governments within the same party label can be very different in their approach to pressure group activity". This difference can be readily seen in the broader environment in which policy in Queensland is made. Government reviews into peak funding, such as the one mentioned above by the Australian Productivity Commission, are also important sources of historical information regarding the programs and policies put into place to strengthen and enhance peak participation in policy process.

Earlier in this chapter I discussed the role of peaks in strengthening democratic practices. In order for this to occur, peaks must attempt to remain representative of their membership

base and provide policy advice that is based on well thought out positions, backed with appropriate evidence where available. Jeff Cheverton who has worked on a number of Queensland social peak boards, including Queensland Shelter, argues that “the role of members and the operations of governing bodies within peak bodies are under-researched and rarely publicly documented” (Cheverton 2005: 428). Further research is required in order to “document examples of responsive, membership-based governance practices in Australian peak bodies” (Cheverton 2005: 428). With this in mind, I pay close attention to Shelter’s emergence as the peak body for social housing in Queensland. The governance practices of Shelter are discussed in detail within chapter five and are also referred to throughout the thesis.

This thesis engages with the governance narrative to explore the changes to advocacy work by community organisations⁸, contributing to the limited empirical research on the role of peak advocacy bodies in the development of social policy. An adaption of Wyn Grant’s pressure group typology (1989) is used to examine the role of Shelter in the development of social housing policy. Oral history has been used to document and analyse changes in the relationship between Shelter and successive governments of Queensland.

⁸ Within this thesis I refer to not-for-profit, community sector organisations and NGO interchangeably. The activities, legal structure and purpose of Shelter can be described using any of these terms. These terms, however, hold slightly different meanings, depending on academic discipline, ethnicity and/or time period. For example ‘NGO’ is used within the “development literature” to refer to “public-benefit nonprofit organisations ...” but used “in government documents it often encompasses for-profit organisations as well” (Lyons 2001:9).

Chapter One:

Persuading government: pressure to advocacy

In recent decades governments have expanded the modes by which they govern, employing a range of tools to steer and direct, including governing through associations and markets and the use of persuasion and community engagement (Bell & Hindmoor 2009). This change is described within the literature as the governance shift (Salamon 1995, Sørensen 2006, Bell & Hindmoor 2009). Governance can be understood as a contrast to traditional forms of governing, in which governments relied on hierarchical power (Grix and Phillips 2011). Within the governance paradigm, the government retains authority and increases capacity to govern by developing relationships with non-state actors (Bell & Hindmoor 2009). The role of the state within the governance paradigm is that of metagovernor. Governments have developed a range of regulatory rules which govern the governance arrangements of non-state actors (Bell & Hindmoor 2009: 46). This has meant a nominally greater role for some community organisations in the development of policy – at the cost of bureaucratisation and a move away from grassroots representation. This chapter examines the impact of the governance shift on the role of not-for-profit advocacy groups; non-state actors have become drawn into complex contractual relationships with governments.

Government and Governance

Scholarly contributions on the impact of the governance shift⁹ are both descriptive and normative (see Osborne 2006). Australian governments have increasingly shifted from the direct provision of welfare services to a contract management role. The state has played a role in developing the community sector to provide social goods and services and at the same time become more willing to listen to the views of some community organisations. There is a normative expectation that the development and involvement of the community

⁹Smith 2009 notes that the literature has taken an “Anglo-American view of the state,” the governance shift is not universal (Dunleavy 1994 & Hood 1995 cited by Smith 2009).

sector is beneficial: in terms of service provision and participation in discussions which underpin the understanding of social problems and their possible solutions.

Torring, Peters, Pierre and Sørensen (2012) describe modern governance as an:

... enhanced interaction between public policymakers and relevant stakeholders, competent and knowledge-based decision-making, innovative policy solutions, flexible and coordinated policy implementation, and democratic ideals about inclusion, empowerment, and ownership (2012: 9).

A key debate within the governance literature is whether the shift from government to governance has undermined the power of the state. Society centric governance scholars argued that non-state actors, as members of policy networks, are increasingly autonomous from government in public policy decision making (Marsh and Rhodes 1992, Kooiman 1993, de Bruijn and ten Heuvelhof 1997 cited in Peters & Pierre 1996: 225). Self-organising networks have been touted as examples of the power of non-state actors and the increasing centrality of society (see Grix and Phillips 2011, Duffy 2006, Newberry 2010); leading to claims of diminishing state capacity (Sørensen & Torring 2009, Rhodes 1996). Others claim, as I do, that although the mechanisms through which governments govern have changed, the state is still central and remains in control (Bell & Hindmoor 2009, Marsh, Richards & Smith 2001). Empirically, while it is clear that public policy decision making involves “complex permutations of government and the private and voluntary sectors” (Bevir & Richards 2009: 5) it is debatable whether policy networks can be claimed to be “the heart of governance” (Bevir & Richards 2009: 5). For all the talk regarding the participation of policy networks, policy cannot be developed and implemented without the agency of government:

This increasing clamour of voices does not mean that governments have allowed the reins of policy-making to slip from their grasp. At the end of the day, no matter the range and depth and variety of policy prescriptions and advice on offer, policy is not actually done until decisions are made and the legitimacy and authority of the government has been engaged (Stewart-Weeks 2006: 190).

Bell & Hindmoor (2009) argue that rather than weaken state capacity these associations enhance the capacity of governments to govern. The state remains in control of complex relationships and associations by ‘governing the governance arrangements;’ which is referred to within the literature as metagovernance. Sørensen (2006: 100) defines metagovernance as “a way of enhancing coordinated governance in a fragmented political

system based on a high degree of autonomy for a plurality of self-governing networks and institutions". More simply metagovernance is the "regulation of self-regulation" (Sørensen 2006: 98), the "governing of governance" (Bell & Hindmoor 2009) and/or "the organization of self-organization (sic)" (Jessop 1998: 42). It is unlikely that a non-state actor will have the capacity to metagovern (Mayntz 1993, Scharpf 1994). As Klijn and Koppenjan write:

They [government] occupy a special position, which in most cases cannot be filled by others. Resources that determine this special position include: sizable budgets and personnel, special powers, access to mass media, a monopoly on the use of force and democratic legitimization (sic) (2000: 151).

However, the possibility of non-government actors as metagovernors is not completely ruled out in the literature ... "the metagovernor can, in principle, be anyone with adequate legitimacy and resources to perform metagovernance; in reality, it will often be state actors" ... (Lund 2009: 248). Sørensen and Torfing (2009) write that "legitimate and resourceful private actors" may also exercise metagovernance (2009: 246). But the instance of nongovernmental metagovernance is argued as rare. Bovaird (2005) argues that the phrase governance without government is at times reported within the literature but that "... in practice, few go so far as to suggest that successful governance can be maintained without the agency of government" (2005: 221). The powers of the state are unrivalled:

The actors who control the modern state have a their disposal a set of powers and resources – from formal constitutional and legal authority to vast fiscal, administrative, informational resources and access to expertise – that are qualitatively and quantitatively unlike those available to other actors in society (Bell & Hindmoor 2009: 71).

A dichotomy between government and governance is a false proposition: it is not a case of either top down hierarchy or governance without government (Rhodes 1996), but more that governments have increased their reach through the use of old and new modes of governance (Bell & Hindmoor 2009). The shift to governance has enabled governments to monitor and oversee the delivery of goods and services by the not-for-profit sectors: enhancing not diminishing state capacity. Bell & Hindmoor (2009) refer to this as state-centric relational governance:

Instead, we develop a 'state-centric relational' account of governance, arguing that states have enhanced their capacity to govern by strengthening their own institutional

and legal capacities but also by developing closer relations with non-state actors ... Our state-centric relational approach emphasises the importance of the state and also the importance of state-society relations in governance (Bell & Hindmoor 2009: xiii-iv).

Governments have increased capacity for regulating non-state activity development through the use of hard and soft regulatory mechanisms which shape and steer activity, examples include “new contracting, procurement and management structures, such as PPPs [private public partnerships], alliances and JVs [Joint Ventures]” (Pinnegar 2011: 10). Successive governments at all levels within Australia have introduced a variety of regulatory frameworks, including “industry standards, monitoring and reporting mechanisms and support for training for both workers and management in the human services” (Siemon 1997: 4). The introduction of Incorporated Associations Acts by each Australian state and territory is an example of soft regulation; interest groups are encouraged (through tax breaks and increased opportunity for funding) but not forced into incorporating.

There is no single explanation for the governance shift. Colebatch (2006) argues that the engagement of non-state actors in policy development is underpinned by several ideas:

ideological – that, in a democratic society, all members of the community can and should join in determining how it will be governed

cognitive – that the problems which policy are addressing are complex, and will not be adequately understood unless all those affected join in the definition of the problem and of appropriate responses to it

tactical – that stakeholder will be more likely to accept the policy outcome if they had a hand in framing it

functional – that for a policy decision to take effect it needs to be understood and accepted (owned) by a wide range of people, not just the officials responsible for its implementation and widespread participation in the policy process will help to bring this about

developmental – that participation promotes a more collaborative form of governing, which actually has more impact than command-and-control models, that is, participation increases the capacity to govern (2006: 114-15).

The tactical and functional elements of Colebatch's list suggest that non-state involvement can aid in legitimising policy decisions – this involvement may also improve implementation processes. The support and inclusion of non-state actors, preferably those that are involved in the program at hand, can aid in successful implementation (Bell & Hindmoor 2009, Pressman & Wildavsky 1984).

Political and economic events and crises have also contributed to the acceptance of non-state involvement. Many western countries experienced fiscal crises following the explosion of social welfare expenditure during the 1980s and 1990s (Bell & Hindmoor 2009). Governments have implemented cost reduction measures and new approaches to public administration – referred to by scholars as New Public Management (NPM)¹⁰. NPM is a critique of the inefficiencies of the welfare state (Maddison & Denniss 2009: 50-1). As Self (1999) writes “the reorganisation of government itself along market lines and utilising market motivations” (1999: 2). Scholars have argued that by outsourcing the provision of goods and services, governments have shifted the responsibility to the community sector (Lyons 2001, McGregor-Lowndes 2008). This may be true regarding day-to-day level of service provision. If, however, something goes terribly wrong the government remains at risk, politically governments are held responsible for either mismanaging the contract and/or not regulating the sector efficiently. A recent example where government was held to account is the Home Insulation Scheme, introduced by the Rudd Federal government. A Royal Commission into the Home Insulation Program was established to examine the actions of the government in light of the death of several employees employed by private contractors.

Tragedies also provide the impetus for government action. In 2000 fifteen people were killed in a fire at the Childers Palace Backpackers Hostel (located in Queensland, Australia). Robert Long was charged with murder and sentenced to life in prison for deliberately lighting the fire which caused the death of hostel residents. Although the government was not responsible for the actions of Long, the incident promoted the Queensland State Labor Beattie Government to establish the fire safety taskforce, which led to the adoption of specific fire safety practices for hostels and boarding houses.

The following sections of this chapter examine the changing role of advocacy groups and the work that governments have come to expect from these groups, in light of the

¹⁰ See Osborne (2006) for a robust discussion examining the intersection between governance and New Public Management.

governance shift. An understanding of this shift is important to this thesis because it represents change to the way in which some community interest groups interact with decision makers. This thesis explores the nature of this change by examining the history and development of Shelter.

Lobbying

The meaning of the word lobby is derived “from the practice of frequenting the lobby of a house of legislature to influence its members into supporting a cause” (Oxford Dictionaries Online 2014). The derivation illustrates the limited access citizens had to decision makers, left with little opportunity other than to waylay politicians in parliamentary and bureaucratic foyers. This is a useful metaphor for understanding how the majority of interest groups operated prior to the governance shift. Unable to participate in policy discussions, groups aimed to persuade the government on alternative courses of action via an array of lobbying techniques.

Lobbying of elected officials has occurred for “as long as nations have had governments” (Sheehan & Sekules 2012: 1). The act of lobbying is a “concentrated, concerted attempt to inform, educate or persuade government to a certain way of thinking ... (Sekules 1984: 2 citing *The Canberra Times*). While groups and individuals have long been involved in lobbying, the language used to identify organisations, the strategies used to persuade and the political environment in which these organisations work have varied over time. Interest group, pressure group, lobbyist, peak advocacy, peak lobby – these terms are used by some interchangeably – yet others use these terms to imply specific types of activities and/or organisations. There is no clear definition of each term, and likely differences in meaning depending on the sector and/or historical period.

Pressure group, for example, is a term and concept which has faded from popular vernacular. In part the term reflected the assumption that government is the elite – decisions were made by elected officials on behalf of the citizens, with little input from those affected by the reform. Affecting change required challenging the elite, applying ‘pressure’ on the government in order to force policy reform. During the social movement period of the 1970s there were public clashes over policies and issues such as the Vietnam War and equal pay and land rights for indigenous people (Maddison & Scalmer 2006: 3). Pressure groups formed in response to social justice issues including affordable housing, women’s rights and gender inequalities.

Many lobbyists were themselves former insiders, hired because they had connections with people in parliament and/or a good understanding of the 'rules of the game', both of which were helpful to interest groups (Sekules 1984: 9). A survey conducted in 1978 by Geoff Allen¹¹ revealed a wide range of activity, with the majority of lobbyists spending the largest percentage of their time monitoring government policy:

90 percent: monitors of government

80 percent: advice on strategy

65 percent: assistance in preparing representations

65 percent: arranging contacts

15 percent: directly representing company's interests

(Sekules 1984: xi)

The hiring of former parliamentary insiders is viewed as problematic in terms of equity and financial probity. Powerful interests have the capacity to hire 'insiders' and rather than contribute to equality, these relationships may have helped to elevate powerful interests. These concerns led to the introduction of the Lobbyists Registration Scheme (LRS) in 1983 by the Australian Federal Government. The LRS did not last long, abolished in 1996 after criticisms regarding its effectiveness (Hogan, Chari & Murphy 2011: 37).

This was, however, a short respite for professional lobbyists, before dramatic instances of corruption and nepotism led to the reintroduction of lobby regulations; these days codes exist federally and in every state in Australia (Civitella 2012: 34). Western Australia was the first state to reintroduce regulations following the Burke scandal in 2007¹². Queensland introduced a lobbyist's code in 2009, established to ensure "transparent and honest" conduct between lobbyists and the government. Unlike the other state's codes, the Queensland code stipulated a "cooling off" period so that ministers could not move directly from parliament to a lobby position (Hogan et al 2011: 38) and banned lobbyists from collecting "success fees" (Hogan et al 2011: 39). The code remains in effect, requiring all ministers to keep a record of any meeting with lobbyists. The impact of this legislation was recently felt by Queensland

¹¹ At the time of the survey, Allen was working as an academic at the University of Melbourne.

¹² In 2007 Western Australia (WA) lobbyist Brian Burke (and former Labor Premier of WA 1983-88) was investigated by the WA Crime and Corruption Commission.

MP Bruce Flegg. Minister Flegg was stood down as the Minister of Housing by Premier Newman, because his office violated the code by failing to record regular meetings he held with his son, a professional lobbyist.

In Queensland, a not-for-profit organisation is not regarded as a “lobbyist” so the rules and regulations stipulated in the Lobbyist Code of Conduct do not apply (Queensland Government 2009: 6). On occasion, I heard Shelter Board or staff members refer to Shelter as a peak lobby group. Shelter is not a lobby group in the legal sense. I had the impression that this language was used because the purpose of a lobby group is well understood.

Non-government organisations have had opportunity to participate more widely in policy development in recent decades (Hancock 2006: 5). A pattern of government action, request for comment and response from the community sector has emerged, supported by the rhetoric of the benefits of community ‘consultation’. In a book on Australian interest group activity published in 1980, Professor Harmon Zeigler indicates that very few non-state actors were involved in the development of policy:

Governmental and non-governmental experts develop policy proposals which are then *responded* to by broader segments of the public, including the most visibly responsive interest groups. A few groups, those with technical resources, are involved in the development of policy. Most groups participate only in the response to policy (Zeigler 1980: 16 italics in original).

Reactivity as the *modus operandi* makes sense within the context of vertical governmental decision making but within the environment of increasing engagement of non-state actors and horizontal networks, the community sector continued to expand and advocacy was legitimised through the establishment of peak policy organisations. In light of the governance shift, interest groups in the NFP sector are expected to do much more than just pressure governments into change. Various impacts of this expectation on Shelter are examined within this thesis research. How have Shelter’s strategies changed over its 25 year history? What impact have these changes had on the role of Shelter in the development of social housing policy?

Advocacy

If the meanings of both lobby and advocacy are taken at face value the work of an advocate or lobbyist appears more or less the same. According to Oxford Dictionaries Online 2014,

the work of an advocate is to provide “public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy” and is derived from the Latin noun *advocare* meaning “to call to one’s aid”. The modern inference of this is that advocacy provides a community service through the promotion of a marginalised interest to government. Notionally while advocates seek to represent the views of a minority to government, lobbyists try to influence changes to legislation to benefit a particular business interest. In reality this is a superficial difference – many would argue that real change occurs with legislative change and the NFP sector also tries to influence legislative change.

Differences are embedded within the social values that are attached to each term. Lobbying is viewed as an activity undertaken to secure self-interest whereas as advocacy is often portrayed as an issue of social justice:

For example, as actors within the policy-making process NGO [non-government organisation] advocacy provides an extra-parliamentary form of representation to communities and individuals ... This function is especially important since many groups within the community can be considered “electorally unpopular” [Sawer 2002: 39] and may lack the influence and/or means to speak for themselves ... (Edgar & Lockie 2010: 356).

Governments within Australia have provided funding and support to the not-for-profit sector for advocacy work – although this support has waxed and waned. Changes to public administration during the 1990s caused the community sector to expand and professionalise. The rhetoric around the participation of non-state actors supported capacity growth within the sector. Prior to the managerial reforms of New Public Management (NPM) governments had provided pockets of funding to some organisations, but this was ad hoc, often tied to project funding and favouring larger organisations. As Hancock (2006) explains:

A voluntary initiative might attract some government funding and this would be renewed each year unless there was some move to eliminate it (or to increase it). These historical funding allocations were criticised for their inefficiencies, lack of accountability and tendency to favour large established or centralised welfare organisations, which were seen as not necessarily efficient or responsive to community needs (2006: 54).

While interest groups have in the past door knocked and tried to gain access to decision makers, the increased emphasis on the benefits of consultation meant that governments

began actively seeking the view of non-state actors. The growth of 'consultation' is more obvious in hindsight, with Salamon (1995) suggesting that:

... this rhetoric of conflict has obscured a development of single importance in the contemporary position of the private nonprofit sector – namely, the growth of vitally important supportive relationships between nonprofit organizations (sic) and the state (1995: 11).

While Salamon, writing about the USA, describes a warm and fuzzy environment of support, a highly productive relationship between governments and NGOs is not widespread. At the heart of the state-centric relational view of the governance shift is an assumption that it has created greater opportunity for citizens to participate. However while governments have encouraged consultation, they have been more restrictive in enabling participation. Co-editor of *Interest Groups and Advocacy* journal and interest group scholar Grant Jordan describes how involving non-state actors in policy can expand "the policy mix":

This governance approach sees the role of groups and causes in educating government, polishing proposals, criticising other group ideas as all positive. It may be a messy way to do business, but it actually both gives room for democratic voices and probably – it is assumed - improves the policy mix (Jordan 2013).

Non-state involvement in the development of public policy takes various forms. The table below provides an overview of the various levels of engagement, at one end governments are involved in providing information, at the other governments may devolve decision making authority to non-state actors. The latter is considered rare, with consultation processes often criticised for merely acting as a means to provide information rather than enabling participation.

Table 1: Consultation objectives and instruments

Information	Consultation	Partnership	Delegation	Control
Survey	Key contacts	Advisory	Public Inquires	Referenda
Focus group	Interest group	committees	Impact	Privatisation
Public information	meetings	Policy	assessment	
campaign	Town hall meetings		studies	
	Circulation of proposals		Communities	
	Public hearings			

Source: Davis 1996: 18 cited in Bridgman & Davis 1998: 83.

As table one indicates, at times the government will form advisory committees, including state and non-state actors, to discuss policy issues. Memberships of advisory committees are limited to a select few, at the discretion of the government and they often include individuals who can be relied upon to back the government of the day or at the very least not upset the applecart. Advisory committees enable the government to collect information and build support and agreement across various policy issues. But a key issue of bringing in some interest groups over others is to ensure that the group chosen can represent a particular sector or sub sector: “Representativeness must be carefully considered when consulting through partnership bodies” (Bridgman & Davis 1998: 85). One of the issues that governments have when forming advisory committees is to decide which organisations to include:

Governments see their role as providing a forum for discussions, ensuring the participants are representatives of the broader community’s interests, and proposing policy ideas that can be debated, modified and adopted with some measure of common support (Bridgman & Davis 1998: 85).

In order to ensure representation and to enable more efficient consultation processes Australian governments at both state and federal levels established peak bodies (Hancock 2006, Bridgman & Davis 1998) to act as an umbrella group for smaller organisations. Melville & Perkins define a community peak as a:

... non-government organisation whose membership consists of smaller organisations of allied interests. The peak body thus offers a strong voice for the specific community sector in the areas of lobbying government, community education

and information sharing between members and interested parties (Melville & Perkins 2003: vii).¹³

The development of peak advocacy organisations simplifies an increasingly complex web of policy actors. Peak organisations are a useful governance tool for the state, because peaks act as a conduit between the government and a particular community sector. As Hancock writes:

One of the strongest demands for peak bodies comes from government because there is a need for a small number of representative bodies through which the government can communicate with the sector ... the community sector was not as well organised or resourced and, for this reason, government have offered financial support to peak bodies in the community sector (2006: 52).

While some peaks are “founded and funded” by the government, the Consumers Health Forum for example (Bridgman & Davis 1998), the majority of peak groups within Australia were established by providing funding to existing community organisations (Australian Government 1995b cited in Cheverton 2005).

Emboldened by the rhetoric which supported the engagement and participation of peaks in the policy process, many community organisations welcomed the opportunity to participate. In this environment interest groups either welcomed the possibility of working with government (on its terms) or were resigned to working outside of the system without opportunity for government funding:

A close working relationship with government is often seen as a strategic goal for not-for-profit organisations that engage in advocacy work ... Organisations without relationship with government are often seen as ‘outsiders’, and may find themselves with little power, funding or influence (Maddison & Edgar 2008: 188).

While pressure groups during the 1970s and 1980s organised public protests and petitions to engender policy change, in the age of ‘new governance’ modern advocacy groups often have outwardly reciprocal relationships with government. Indeed “the rhetoric of ‘partnership and participation’ is increasingly promoted by government in Australia as the way to forge

¹³ Peak organisation may also have individuals as members. Queensland Shelter and QCOS for example have both organisations and individuals as members.

new and more meaningful relationships with the not-for-profit sector” (Melville 2008: 103). Governments have formed ‘partnerships’ with non-state actors in order to work on specific issues and/or for the delivery of goods and services. The nature and impact of these partnerships on service delivery and government/non-government interaction is contested.

Pascal (1996) argues that “the term ‘government partnership’ is an oxymoron, given that governments have considerable difficulty sharing power and decision making” (Voluntary Sector Roundtable cited by Melville 2008: 105). In 2003 an Australian Research Council funded research project into Australian Peak organisations, found that some peaks were distrustful of their relationship with state and federal levels of government, frustrated by a lack of funds, “token” participation and federalism (Melville 2008). One interviewee participant, who was a member of the Queensland community sector declared:

The relationship between the Government and the non-government sector here is dreadful. It is a whole lot of rhetoric on partnership and God knows what else, but it has taken a backward step in control (Interview respondent 27 cited in Melville & Perkins 2003: 66).

Specifically the relationship between the state bureaucracy and Queensland peaks appeared shaky, one interviewee representing a Queensland housing peak stated:

They invite us in only when it suits them, and if we find out about things after they've gone five miles down the track they say 'I'm really sorry, I don't think you'd be interested in being involved in that point of view. But, this is what's already been decided and if you would like to make some comment, then fine' ... (Interview Respondent 24 cited in Melville & Perkins 2003: 66).

The quote above illustrates the frustration felt at the lack of power and involvement in decision making. As discussed in prior paragraphs there are varying levels of consultation and problems arise when the ‘consulted’ feel they should be in a partnership rather than an information sharing activity. While peak organisations had hoped to be at the table participating in the policy development, some peaks were discouraged by the lack of ‘real’ engagement by decision makers and/or the bureaucracy (Melville & Perkins 2003).

One participant at the 2004 Queensland Council of Social Services (QCROSS) conference declared:

Our partnerships have not grown despite all the changes – it's still about the government providing funding and then we deliver the services. We have no real say in policy development. In our capacity to respond to policy is very limited by our scramble to deliver services and by our accountability requirements. I'd like to see more equality in our partnerships with government (QCOSS 2004: 7 cited by Hancock 2006: 55).

It would appear from research discussed in this chapter (Melville & Perkins 2003, Hancock 2006), that some community organisations believe their role in policy development is restricted. This provides a context for examining Shelter's relationship (and role) with successive Queensland Governments. What impact has becoming a peak had on the capacity of Shelter to participate? What if any are the limits to consultation processes from Shelter's point of view? Is there any evidence that Shelter was in a partnership with government players? Are the views illustrated here representative of Shelter?

Compacts: Sharing a table not a bed¹⁴

Ironically while funding agreements with the community sector provided community organisations with the funds to develop the capacity to deliver goods and services and/or to participate in the development of policy, scholars argue that funding contracts are a means to restricting advocacy – funded groups are fearful of damaging the relationship with the government so avoid criticising the government of the day (Maddison & Edgar 2008, Casey & Dalton 2006, Maddison & Denniss 2005, Melville 2001, Melville & Perkins 2003, Sawyer 2002 cited by McGregor-Lowndes 2008: 51). The interviews conducted for this research demonstrate that Shelter were aware of this tension but were also mindful of the need to represent the sector and provide meaningful policy advice. Political leaders and senior public servants were appreciative of policy advice that were informed by evidence and expressed a willingness to listen to critical advice. This willingness likely varies depending on the personality and political will of decision makers. As one interviewee suggested there is significant variability regarding the impact of government funding on the organisation's capacity to advocate:

¹⁴ Jill Lang, attributed this turn of phrase to former President of QCOSS Karyn Walsh "we [community organisations and government] are not in bed together we are at the same table (Lang 2013 interview by the author).

A government funded body ... has to also worry about what its government funding will be and the government funding obviously comes with strings attached and sometimes it's more and sometimes it's less (Eastgate 2013 interview by the author).

Attempts have been made by Australian governments and the not-for-profit sector to address these issues. Compacts were adopted by each of the states and territories in Australia¹⁵ in order to regulate the relationship between the community sector and the government, see table 2. These were based on similar arrangements developed in the mid-1990s in the UK (Casey & Dalton 2006: 26).

Table 2: Australian Compacts

State	Policy Title
NSW	Keep Them Safe: A Shared Approach to Child Wellbeing (2009) Stronger Together: A New Direction for Disability Services in NSW 2006-2016
VIC	The Action Plan for Strengthening Community Organisations (2008)
QLD	The COMPACT Governance Committee Action Plan (2008)
SA	Common Ground (2004)
WA	Funding and Purchasing Community Services Policy (2002) Western Australian Drug and Alcohol Strategy (2005-09)
TAS	The Office for the Community Sector (2008)
ACT	ACT Social Compact (2004) The Community Sector Funding Policy (2004)

Reproduced in full (Australian Government 2010).

As part of my research for this project I interviewed Jill Lang, former Director of QCOSS and Chair of the Queensland Community Services Futures Forum. The Futures Forum brought approximately 30 peaks and large community organisations to work on the negotiation of a Compact with the Bligh Labor government. During her interview Lang explained that the Compact was a formal agreement seeking to establish a more collaborative relationship between the social services sector and the Queensland Labor government led by Anna Bligh. In Lang's words the purpose of the Compact was to foster:

... a better working relationship – that's all gone now [post the election of the Newman Government] ... And part of the idea behind the Compact was that this funder/provider relationship the government has with us is unworkable when we are both providing complementary services for disadvantaged people. Governments

¹⁵ A federal Compact was signed by the Rudd Labor government in 2010.

provides services, we provide services. We needed to be working together in partnership to do this (Lang 2013 interview by the author).

Lang described the benefits of partnership between the government and non-government sectors, providing some work she had recently undertaken with child protection as an example:

When government and the community sector work together there has to be some shared values and shared end goals and so even though they provide the funds, we both provide the services so you have to be able to work together, you can't have the 'us' and them' mentality ... A child protection worker has to have the support of and work with a whole range of organisations to work with that family. You've got to know what you've all got in common and what you jointly want to achieve (Lang 2013 interview by the author).

Former Director-General of Housing, Linda Apelt described the impact of the Compact as the "maturing of the relationship" between the government and the community sector.

Because that, that policy trajectory was about maturing the relationship between the not-for-profit providers and also the stakeholder groups, peak bodies if you like and government policy making. Because prior to this Compact it is a bit hit and miss and quite a bit of animosity between ... government and non-government (Apelt 2012 interview by the author).

The Queensland Compact illustrates the willingness of the Bligh Government to work in partnership with the community sector to provide social services. In this environment QCOSS were able to bring together members of the community sector to develop an agreement which would improve the relationship between the Bligh Labor government and the non-government sector. The political environment changed with the election of the Newman Government – the focus of this government was contractual agreements and contestable markets.

In their research into Compacts in NSW and England, Edgar and Lockie determined that the success of Compacts between governments and non-state actors was dependent on the support of the government of the day:

Working Together has received little support from the NSW government and has largely fallen off their policy agenda, justified only through a change in Premier.

This highlights the flimsiness of compacts in ensuring NGO independence as it is only with a government onside that they have any meaning. If this is taken away (as has also occurred in Canada and France), NGOs will be left only with “great compact documents” [Osborne and McLaughlin 2002: 58] and little else (Edgar and Lockie 2010: 364).

Research conducted for the *Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector* report, published by the Australian government in the late 1990s, noted that there was “considerable variability in the extent to which these problems apply to any particular service area or the policies and programs of any particular government agency” (Australian Government 2010: 382). This variety gives cause for further research to understand the nuances of partnerships between governments and peak organisations. Compared with other western countries, there is limited Australian research¹⁶ on the impact of the governance shift on the role of peak advocacy groups (Lyons & Passey 2006 cited by Barraket 2008). Empirical research into the role and capacity of specific peak organisations is needed in order to determine how these organisations operate and to assess the barriers and opportunity for non-state participation in policy making. Forms of influence may change over time reflecting the composition of the peak (board, membership, and staff), the wider economic, political and social context and the organisations’ resources.

Grant (1989: 117) included the following as important resources to interest groups: internal group structures, financial resources, staff resources, membership mobilisation capabilities, sanctioning capacity and choices of strategy. These are important considerations for ensuring that groups can effectively propose policy solutions and participate in the development of public policy. These resources support the work of interest groups in persuading governments to adopt ideas. I propose, however, that the existence of some may make up for shortages in others. Low financial and staff resources may be compensated by membership mobilisation capacity. Shelter had a very small number of paid staff in 1993, yet the organisation had an insider relationship with the Goss government. What they lacked in resources, in the early days, was circumvented by the strong relationships that members had developed with the government of the day while in opposition. While arguably Shelter worked with the government on a broader set of policy

¹⁶ A notable exception is a comparative study by Onyx, Dalton, Melville, Casey and Banks in 2007. This study focussed on the relationship between government and community organisations using a case study methodology.

issues in the later period (during the Beattie era), low resource levels did not prevent Shelter from becoming an insider during the Goss era in the early 1990s. The political context is as important as the physical resources of a group. Within the social sector it is difficult to separate political will from group resources, because resources are often a result of a political commitment to support and/or develop a specific group. Nowadays insider groups are expected to have a sophisticated knowledge of policy problems and the capacity to provide evidence based policy solutions.

In an article examining the power of the National Farmers Union during the Foot and Mouth crisis in the United Kingdom, Hindmoor (2009) argued the “NFU [National Farmers Union’s] influence over government policy can be explained primarily in terms of persuasion through priming rather than bargaining and resources” (2009: 76). The work of persuading governments by conceptualising a problem in a certain way, can be understood as ‘communicative labour’ (Dempsey 2011). Communicative labour is the work of communicating social problems and prospective solutions. Providing evidence based solutions to policy problems is vital to a peak’s success at working with government.

As elected governments are responsible for public policy decisions the ability of a peak organisation to push issues onto the policy agenda and set preferences for policy solutions is a very relevant focus in the study of pressure group power and influence. Dempsey argues that more research is need to:

better understand the politics of communicative labour, including how non-profits mobilize (sic) discourse, and how these discourses carry their own sets of politics and forms of power (Dempsey 2011: 149).

In mobilising support, community organisation may choose to work with other like-minded organisations. Shelter has worked closely with other peak bodies, including the Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS) and Tenants’ Union of Queensland. Tensions between organisations do, however, occur when resources are sparse. This is especially true of advocacy peaks which rely on government funding. From my research, conflict between the Queensland housing peaks was exacerbated by ministerial preferences for ‘one voice’ rather than the proliferation of advocacy from a number of organisations. Several attempts were made to reduce the number of peak housing organisations in Queensland before Minister Schwarten successfully reduced funding to one peak body in 2007. It suits both politicians and senior public servants to receive representational policy advice from one

representative, but this places more pressure on the 'one' to provide that advice. More recently the push for community providers awarded through a commercial (competitive) tendering process, has impacted on collaboration between organisations with the social housing sector (Hudson 2013 interview by the author).

Participation by non-state actors has become normalised following the governance shift, although the extent and impact of this participation continues to be debated. This debate informed my adaption of an existing interest group typology in order to examine variances in the way in which an interest group, in this case Shelter, participates in the policy process. Participation differs depending on the specific interest group, policy issue and government will. Some interest groups are invited to participate more closely or fully in the development of public policy than others, an overt example of this is the funding of certain grassroots organisations to act as umbrella peaks. Survey research with members of the not-for-profit sector in Australia indicates that relationships between some community peaks and Australian governments have fallen short of expectations (Melville & Perkins 2003). In this study I examine the relationship between Shelter and governments of Queensland between 1987 and 2012 to determine whether Shelter's experience differs from those already documented. The next chapter proposes a theoretical framework which will be used throughout each of the case studies in order to closely examine the participation of Queensland Shelter in policy work.

Chapter Two:

Insider typology: why insider status remains a privileged position

This chapter proposes an updated version of Wyn Grant's insider typology in order to provide a framework for analysing the relationship between a peak advocacy group and the government of the day. While the literature about community groups has openly criticised the limits of consultation and debated the merit and/or depth of participation there has been less scholarly attention, in recent times, to the variances experienced by community organisations - some groups gain greater access and participation than others. Wyn Grant developed his pressure group typology to distinguish between pressure groups that had gained access to British policy decision makers and those that were outside of the political process. The typology was developed in the late 1970s, prior to the governance shift outlined in chapter one, during a period where the involvement of interest groups in the development of public policy was more restricted (Grant 2004).

The dominant assumption within Grant's typology is that insider groups are more likely to influence governments than outsider groups (Page 1999, Baggott 1995, Grant 2004 & 2001, Binderkrantz 2005, McKinney & Halpin 2007). Grant's typology acknowledges that some pressure groups enjoyed much closer relationships with the government of the day than others – he labelled these 'insiders'. Grant argued that access to decision makers enabled an interest group to be influential. Without access it was much harder, although not impossible, for a group to influence policy decisions. Importantly Grant argued that the typology could be used to examine the process through which interest groups develop the capacity for systemic interaction with decision makers:

... the distinction is an important one because it assists our understanding of the process whereby some outsider groups eventually become insider groups, thus uncovering some of the processes of change at work in the pressure group system (Grant 1989: 18).

In Grant's typology, insider groups were "regarded as legitimate by government and are consulted on a regular basis" (Grant 1989: 14). According to Grant, insider groups have several defining characteristics. First the insider group needs to have legitimate, specialised knowledge of their particular policy interest and the ability to communicate this interest to parliamentarians and public servants. Second as insider groups they have permission to "engage" with the government on the issue. Last, having both communicated policy interests and engaged with government, as insiders "they [have] implicitly agreed to abide by certain rules of the game" (Grant 2004: 408). There were several sub classifications within insider status: high profile insiders, low profile insiders and prisoner groups. High profile insiders and low profile insiders were categorised by examining the strategies that these groups use to influence governments. A high profile insider seeks a high media profile while a low profile group prefers to work discreetly, continually fostering close relationships with decision makers, 'behind closed doors'. 'Prisoner groups' are those that are 'captured' because of a shared ideology with government. Grant reasoned that over time the ideas of the interest group become synonymous with the ideas of government. When this occurs the insider group is unable to offer any contradictory advice and thus has become 'captured', in effect ceasing to have much impact within government decision making.

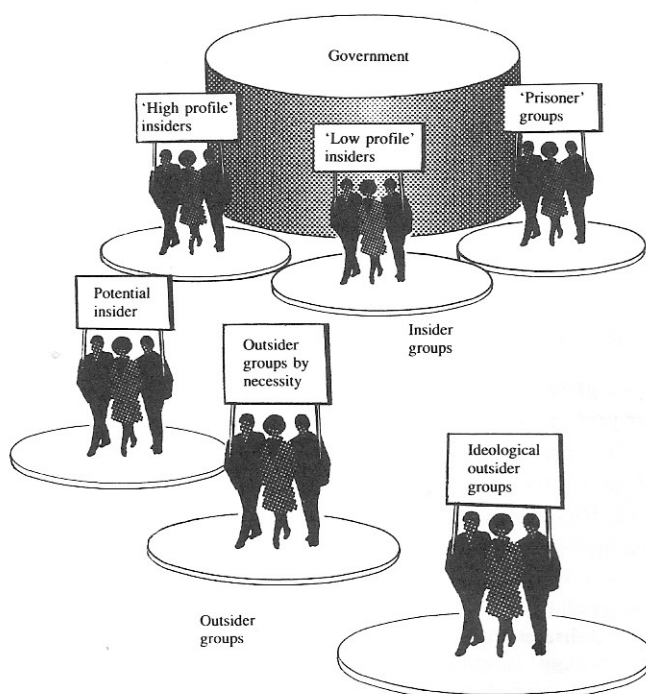


Illustration 1: A typology of pressure groups

Reproduced in full (Grant 1989:15)

Outsider groups are those that do not operate within the same circles as government. These groups are outside either because they do not share a common ideology with government or because they do not understand the rules of the game and lack political “sophistication” (Grant 1989: 17). The typology included three types of outsider group. Ideological outsider was a group that chose to remain outside due to political beliefs as opposed to an outsider by necessity, which is any interest group lacking the knowledge and/or political skills to work as an insider. A potential insider was a group which has “yet to win government acceptance” but has the potential to do so in the future (Grant 1989: 17). Grant made two central arguments in relation to this typology. First he argued that outsider groups were less able to influence public policy decisions. Second he suggested that strategy choice was dependant on status; outsider groups use outsider strategies and insider groups use insider strategies.

Grant was not the first to acknowledge the variances in relationships between interest groups and the state. Schattschneider (1935) used the terms ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ to describe and discuss groups who were likely to have contact with decision makers and those who were not. Dearlove (1973) employed ‘helpful’ and ‘unhelpful’ to make similar distinctions and Newton (1976) used the terms ‘established’ and ‘non-established’ (Maloney, Jordan & McLaughlin 1994: 18). Maloney et al (1994) suggest that Wyn Grant has made the most “influential British contribution” to this body of literature (1994: 18). The prominent dominant assumption within the typology is that insider groups are more likely to influence governments than outsider groups (Baggott 1995, McKinney & Halpin 2007, Binderkrantz 2005, Page 1999, Grant 1989, 2004 & 2001).

A notable critique of Grant’s typology was provided by Maloney, Jordon and McLaughlin (1994), in which the authors argued that Grant had confused status with strategy. Other criticisms emerged within the literature in light of the governance shift. In the following paragraphs I examine the critique by Maloney et al (1994) and criticisms by others, defending the continued relevance of the distinction between insider and outsider groups and proposing some revisions to the original typology.

Status and Strategy

Maloney et al (1994) argued that Grant had ‘conflated’ status with strategy in his sub classifications of insider groups. They argued that the classifications of high and low profile groups related to the strategies that interest groups employed while the category of ‘prisoner’ groups related to the status of the group. In their revision of the typology, they consciously

separated what Grant had united, and developed separate categories for both status and strategy:

The two dimensions [status and strategy] require a distinct vocabulary. This might be sensibly attained by explicitly attaching the insider/outsider terms to strategy, and developing a complementary set of terms to distinguish the status dimension from strategy ones (Maloney et al 1994: 29-30).

In separating status from strategy they renamed the insider classifications as core insider, specialist insider and peripheral insider. Outsider group by necessity and ideological outsider group remained, but potential insider group was removed from the typology. Prisoner group was also removed - although Maloney et al (1994) agreed that capture was a possibility, but it was more likely the result of resource dependency than ideology. The Maloney et al (1994) revised typology is represented below:

1. Insider status

- i. Core Insider Group
- ii. Specialist Insider Group
- iii. Peripheral Insider Group

2. Outsider Status

- i. Outsider Group by Ideology or Goal
- ii. Outsider Group by Choice

(Maloney et al 1994: 30).

In terms of strategy, Maloney et al (1994) outlined three types: insider, outsider and thresholder. The authors adapted thresholder strategy from May and Nugent's (1982) work on interest groups. Thresholder groups fluctuate between "pursuing and not pursuing a symbiotic relationship with decision-makers and are "characterised by strategic ambiguity and oscillation between insider and outsider strategies" (May & Nugent 1982: 7 cited in Maloney et al 1994: 28). Groups that are thresholder may choose to operate across insider and outsider classifications. These types of groups may use "... an insider strategy of close consultation with decision makers and an outsider strategy based on public appeals through the media and mobilization (sic) of group members and citizens" (Gais & Walker 1991: 696, Jordan and Maloney 1997: 181, Kollman 1998: 23 cited in Binderkrantz 2005: 696).

It is now widely recognised that interest groups have some flexibility in the types of strategies they use and many operate as thresholder groups (Grant 1989 & 2001, Maloney et al 1994,

Binderkrantz 2005). In a study on interest groups in Denmark, Binderkrantz (2005) also made a case for the separation of status from strategy in the study of interest groups:

In order to avoid the connotations of the terms ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ and the assumption that outsider strategies are inferior, it is preferable to distinguish between direct strategies where groups approach public decision makers, and indirect strategies where influence on policy is sought in more indirect ways (2005: 696).

Outside or indirect strategies are those which use mobilisation or target the media and direct strategies are those which target the public service, the parliament or the political parties. The table below outlines direct and indirect strategies.

Table 3: Categorisation of influence strategies and examples of activities

Direct Strategies		Indirect Strategies	
Administrative Strategy	Parliamentary Strategy	Media Strategy	Mobilisation Strategy
Contacting the relevant minister	Contacting parliamentary committees	Contacting reporters	Arranging public meetings and conferences
Contacting national public servants	Contacting party spokespersons	Writing letters to the editor and columns	Organizing (sic) letter writing campaigns
Actively using public committees, etc.	Contacting other members of parliament	Issuing press releases and holding press conferences	Arranging strikes, civil disobedience, direct action and public demonstrations
Responding to request for comments	Contacting party organisations	Publicizing (sic) analyses and research reports	Conducting petitions

Table reproduced in full (Binderkrantz 2005: 696).

Peak organisations, including Queensland Shelter, use both direct and indirect strategies in order to influence decision makers. I argue, however, that there are degrees to which these strategies can be employed and that this is based on their relationship with both politicians and public servants and especially with the Minister presiding over the housing portfolio. In order to preserve relationships with the government Shelter needs be cautious about the way in which they use indirect (outsider) strategies. A large protest rally for example may jeopardise their relationship with the government and be detrimental to their overall policy

goals. A less intense version of a mobilisation strategy, such as arranging a smaller meeting with members of the sector or arranging a conference and inviting the public, will often be seen by the Minister and/or senior bureaucrats as acceptable: especially if the tone of the activity is not explicitly critical of current policy. Shelter must also be conscious of their member base: if they are seen to be doing little in terms of advocating for housing this will not be viewed positively by their members or by the government. Grant sums up this predicament:

The growth in the use of direct action strategies¹⁷ poses difficult problems for established insider groups. If they endorse or participate in the more militant forms of direct action, their relationship with government is likely to be damaged. On the other hand, if they fail to respond to demands from their membership for a more robust stance towards government, members may leave the organisation or organise dissent within it. Leaderships of groups are faced with a difficult balancing act between the requirements of a responsible relationship with government and the demands of members for more confrontational strategies ... (Grant 2001: 343).

Others argue that governments are aware of these pressures and that they accept that groups will often need to use outsider tactics. Governments expect that “groups loudly criticize (sic) governmental decisions” and this does not necessarily mean it will rob “them of insider access” (Jordan & Richardson 1987: 36-7, Page 1999: 212 cited in Binderkrantz 2005: 695). I argue that a government’s acceptance of an insider groups’ use of outsider tactics is limited, impacted by the political ideology of the government of the day, state legitimacy on the issue at hand and the general political mood. While I agree that interest groups are likely to use a range of both insider and outsider strategies, the choice of strategy and the degree to which it is pursued are dependent on the status of the group, including its own power/ membership base. An issue with (2005) categorisation of influence strategies is that these broad headings cannot account for the degree to which strategies have been employed. In terms of influence the outcomes of the strategy choice illustrates more than the strategy itself. A direct (insider) strategy, such as contacting the relevant minister, will have different outcomes depending on the status of the interest group. A core insider will

¹⁷ Confusingly Binderkrantz (2005) used indirect to describe outsider tactics and Grant (2001) uses direct action to describe outsider strategies. Binderkrantz has chosen indirect because it involves the relationship with the public, through the use of mobilisation and the media and Grant uses direct to convey a message of confrontation and public protest.

have an existing developed relationship with the decision makers and is likely to be able to phone the Minister directly. Peripheral insiders will not be able to do this, and instead may find themselves talking with a ministerial staffer or having to wait to put forward their view at a formal routine meeting or consultation. An outsider on the other hand is most likely to resort to sending a petition to the Minister's office. The indirect and direct classification may be useful as a tool for examining types of contact, but it tells little about whether the strategy can be influential. Because interest groups use a variety of strategies, strategy choices cannot be used to determine the status of a group. Separating status from strategy makes it difficult to examine the relationship between an interest group and the government in much detail. While I agree that interest groups are likely to use a range of both insider and outsider strategies, the choice of strategy and the degree to which it is pursued are dependent on the whether the group is an insider or outsider.

The Age of Consultation – Why insider status remains a privileged position.

As discussed in detail in chapter one, modern governance is characterised by the willingness of governments to include a range of organisations in making public policy decisions - leading scholars, including Wyn Grant himself, to argue that the typology may be less useful than when first developed (Maloney et al 1994, Grant 2001, Binderkrantz 2005) because insider status is no longer difficult to achieve. However the willingness of governments to engage meaningfully is debatable and can vary with the personality of the premier or key minister of the day and/or the overall stance of a particular government. I argue that the number of interest groups that achieve insider status remains limited despite all of the rhetoric regarding community engagement, consultation, participation and partnership with non-state actors. It is clear that governments interact with interest groups more frequently than previously and interest groups make use of both insider and outsider strategies independent of the status of their relationship with the state. This makes both the issue of access and the study of strategy far less important to the question of influence than what was originally argued for in Grant's typology. What is important is the ability of the group to form a relationship with decision makers in which frequent formal and informal interaction occurs, views are exchanged and there is acknowledgement from both parties that positive outcomes derive from the exchange.

Despite protestations, made by Grant in the early 2000s that the pressure group typology "has some utility" but "the rent to be extracted from it is probably diminishing" (2004: 408), I argue that the distinction between insider and outsider groups remains highly relevant to the

study of participation by interest groups in the development of public policy. Insider status means more today than it did in the past. While insider status in the 1970s signalled some access to decision makers, in today's political climate insider status permits 'active participation' which in the early 2000s the Queensland government defined as "relationships that enable government and citizens to share in agenda setting, policy dialogue and the development and evaluation of policy, program and service options" (Queensland Government 2011a).

Consultation has become an expected part of the public decision making process and has led to the questioning of the continued relevance of an 'insider' group, in a political environment which outwardly encourages public consultation. In 2011 the Queensland ALP government adopted a three tier approach to engaging with communities.¹⁸ I have reproduced it below to demonstrate the differences between the objectives of various consultation processes:

Table 4: Three tiers of engagement

	Information	Consultation	Active participation
Objective	To ensure citizens/stakeholders have access to information that is accurate, relevant, appropriate, easy to access and easy to understand. While information sharing alone does not constitute public involvement, stakeholders need information in order to contribute to consultation or active participation processes.	To seek and receive the views of citizens/stakeholders on issues that directly affect them or in which they may have a significant interest, and provide feedback on how citizen input contributed to the final outcome.	To develop relationships that enable government and citizens to share in agenda setting, policy dialogue and the development and evaluation of policy, program and service options.
Critical factors	Citizens must have easy, equitable and timely access to information and the method of delivery must be appropriate for	There must be clarity about the goals of consultation, the roles and responsibilities of government and citizens/stakeholders,	There must be clarity about the extent to which the views of citizens will be taken into account in decision making processes.

¹⁸ The three tiers are based on the Queensland Government's Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Engagement Model.

	Information	Consultation	Active participation
	the issue and the intended audience.	and their level of influence. There should be stated mechanisms for feedback.	There must be sufficient time and flexibility to allow for the emergence of new ideas by citizens.
Desired outcomes	Citizens are better informed about government policies, programs and services and about how to access information and services.	Greater involvement of citizens and communities in the business of government, greater understanding of government policy and decision making processes, and better community outcomes. More effective policies, programs and services that represent the diverse needs of citizens and communities. Heightened trust and confidence in government.	Greater involvement of citizens and communities in the business of government, greater understanding of government policy and decision making processes. Civic capacity strengthened, roles and responsibilities clarified, resources mobilised, and more effective policies, programs and services that represent the diverse needs of citizens and communities. Heightened trust and confidence in government.

Reproduced in full (Queensland Government 2011a).

The three tiers of engagement illustrate the varying levels of non-state engagement. Employing the language from Grant's original typology insider groups would be active participants, periphery insiders are consulted and outsider groups are likely to only be informed. This thesis explores insider status as a means to better understand the active participation of interest groups in the development of policy. The following section of this chapter outlines a revised typology which ties the status of the group to the level of engagement in public policy development.

Revised Pressure Group Typology

In light of criticisms made of existing insider typologies I suggest revising Grant's typology so that there is an emphasis on the level of interaction between the State and the peak interest group. I have revised the interest group typology to acknowledge that consultation (or access to decision makers) is not the same as participation. This study equates the likelihood of an advocacy group's capacity to influence the government of the day with the increased opportunity to participate in the processes of public policy development. The revision classifies interest groups according to their relationship with public policy decision makers. Unlike Grant's original typology which equated status with strategy, this revision equates status with participation. I argue that an interest group that participates in many of the stages of public policy development is an insider. In order to revise the typology so that it reflects the levels of engagement, the Australian Policy Cycle (Althaus, Bridgman & Davis 2007) was used as a framework for analysing the participation of Shelter in policy development.

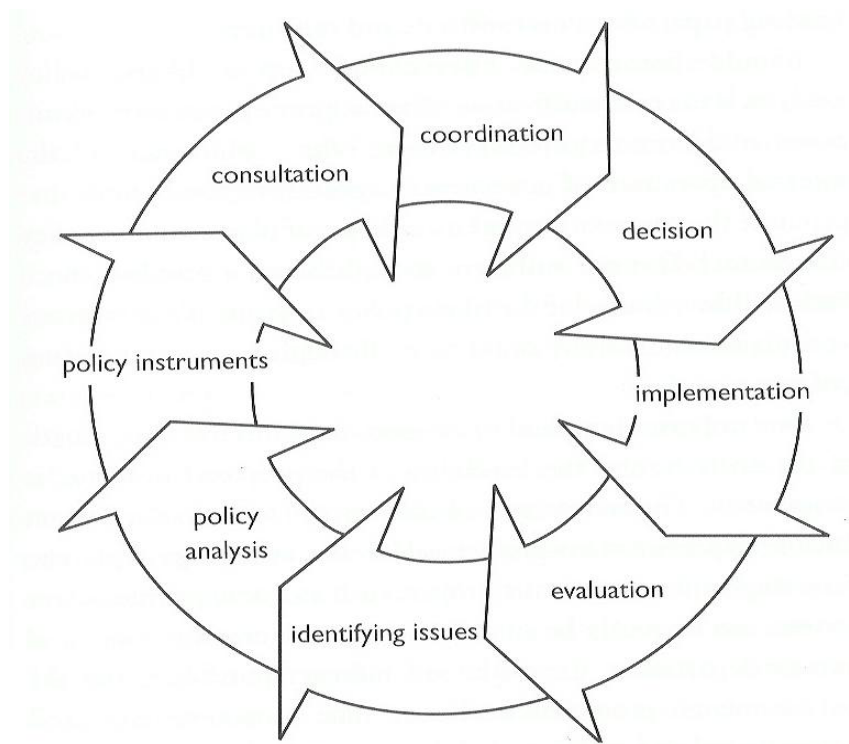


Illustration 2: The policy cycle

(Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2007: 37)

The Australian policy cycle presents policy making as a rational process; through which decisions are made in an ordered cyclical manner and it is because of this that it has received scholarly criticism (Everett 2003). The authors however contend that it is a 'useful

heuristic tool' for examining and discussing decision making. While I agree that public policy is rarely, if ever, developed in a rational cyclical fashion, it is helpful to use each of the policy stages as a starting point in order to examine the role of interest groups in policy development. In particular the cycle was useful for providing a framework for analysing interest group participation. Insider groups can be involved in most of the stages, with the exception of decision making and the coordination stage. Government remains the only political actor with the authority to coordinate policy across departments and make public policy decisions. In contrast outsider and peripheral groups have minimal engagement.

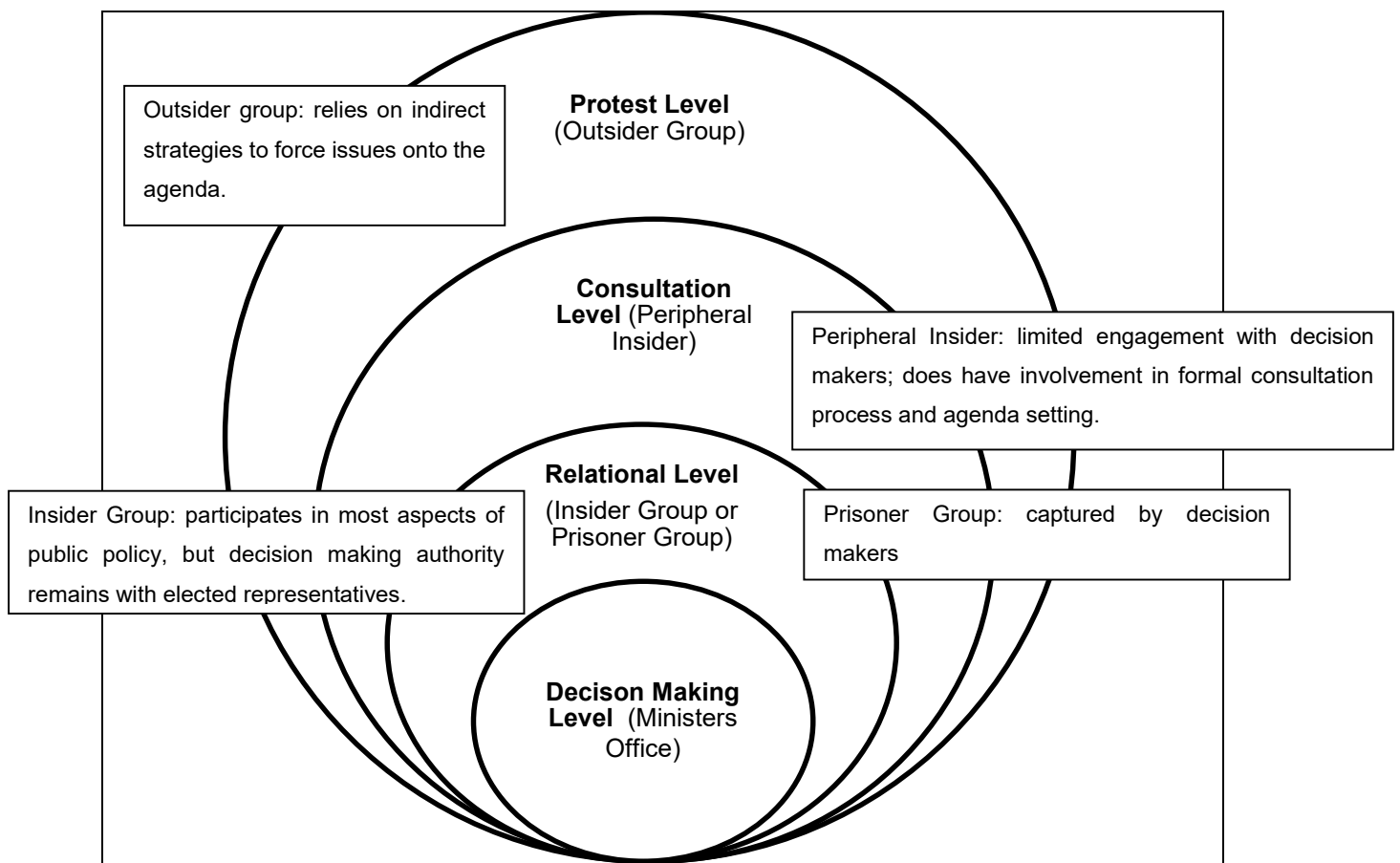


Illustration 3: Revised interest group typology

I use terms from both Grant's original typology (1989) and Maloney et al (1994) to conceptualise whether a group is working within, from outside or on the edge (periphery) of government decision making, see illustration 3. I argue that these terms are made more meaningful by describing the level of participation within the policy making process in

conjunction with insider or outsider status¹⁹. This negates the issues associated with using strategy choice as an indicator of status.

Protest level/ outsider groups

My revised version removes two of the categories of outsider groups: outsider by necessity²⁰ and potential insider. In the current political environment any group that has basic resources and political knowledge and that wishes to make comment on political decision making would be able to work as a peripheral insider. Therefore a group that works outside the system does so because it chooses to remain outside or chooses to retain an ideological position which leaves it incapable of working with government on issues. Outsider groups can be influential but only in identifying issues and in some limited capacity to set agendas. Their capacity to influence is based on their ability to frame an issue to capture the attention of the public. In order to do this they will need to use indirect strategies and rely on mobilisation or high profile media to get the attention of the government and the sympathy of the public. A good example of the type of group that works at the protest level is People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). This radical group uses stunts involving celebrities and often gruesome pictures of animal cruelty to get the attention of the media and force animal rights onto the policy agenda.

Kingdon (1984) describes the policy agenda as “the list of subjects or problems to which governmental officials, and people outside of government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention at any given time” (1984: 3). In PETA’s protest against sheep mulesing, they employed indirect strategies including boycotts and protests in order to ‘force’ the hand of clothing retailers. From PETA’s point of view, as consumers became ‘aware’ of the issues associated with producing wool in Australia it was hoped that they would choose not to buy garments made with Australian wool. As PETA are ideologically opposed to the use of animals for any purpose, including farming and as pets, it is unimaginable that they would consider working at either the consultation level or insider level; their core ideology is vastly different from that of the status quo. Outsider groups can incite change using protest strategies. Their success and power is usually derived from high

¹⁹ The role of interest group involvement in the development of policy is noted by Grant in *Pressure Groups, Politics and Democracy* (1989).

²⁰ Grant acknowledged that if the aims of the code of practice regarding open consultation developed by the Blair Labour Government in 2000 were achieved then “the outsider groups by necessity category should largely disappear” (2004: 410).

membership numbers and/or strong media coverage combined with support of the general public.

Both insider and outsider groups are involved in agenda setting. Agenda setting is an important early step for advocacy groups; it is “The process by which demands of various groups in the population are translated into items vying for the serious attention of public officials ...” (Cobb et al 1976: 126). Down’s (1972) seminal work on agenda setting identified several requirements for getting an issue onto the political agenda. The issue needed to affect relatively large numbers of people, have a realistic solution and capture the interest of the general public (Downs 1973). The work of presenting a clearly defined issue as one that affects the majority and is simple to resolve is referred to as “framing” (McCombs 1981 cited in Howlett & Ramash 2003: 129). Framing can also be used to promote a particular solution to a problem. If an interest group successfully frames homelessness as an issue arising from high levels of poor mental health, as opposed to unemployment, for example, then it follows that solutions to homelessness will also be framed within a mental health paradigm. In reality, however, it is never this clear cut, with sustained competing views regarding the causes and possible solutions to public problems.

Peripheral insiders/ consultation level

Peripheral insiders have the ability to participate in both consultation and issue identification phases of the policy cycle. While they are likely to be routinely contacted by the department on various issues that may concern them, they do not have the resources (or acceptance by decision makers) to be involved in policy discussions which may also involve negotiation and/ or bargaining. Decision makers involve themselves with these groups to legitimise policy decisions and provide information on emerging policy directions. In the housing sector, peripheral insiders may receive part funding (in the form of grants) from the government. They may be contracted by the state to provide goods or services. Peripheral insiders will also have the opportunity to become members of a peak policy organisation, such as Shelter, enabling the submission of policy advice as part of broad consultation strategies. However the likelihood of this advice being incorporated within policy is at the discretion of decision makers. Successive Queensland governments have emphasised the government’s ‘need’ to choose the right level of engagement; this is dependent on the “stakeholders involved, the issue or policy being considered and the objectives of engagement” (Queensland Government 2011a). Peripheral insiders can involve themselves at the information and consultation tiers, but are unable to engage in active participation.

Insider group/ relational level

Insider groups occupy privileged positions with decision makers. At the relational level contact between the government and the interest group is both formal and informal. Both the state and the insider group place value on the relationship - the relationship is positive sum. Insider groups will on some occasions be able to bargain with the state, but as Grant (2001) noted, in the case of groups that are funded by government this is a difficult proposition and insider groups will need to remain politically savvy in order to be able to do this, retaining their own policy vision while keeping governments and members in broad agreement. Interest groups at a relational level are likely to be involved in all parts of the policy making process, with the exception of the decision and coordination stages, as discussed in earlier paragraphs.

Decision Making Level

The insider typology is useful for understanding the relationship between an interest group and its ministry but is unable to account for a nuanced understanding of the role of other, important, institutions within Queensland decision making. The development of policy occurs within a much broader state and commonwealth political context. Legislative change must gain approval from the Queensland Premier's office, Queensland Treasury and Queensland Cabinet, before policy is presented to parliament. The Premier of the day is likely to have priorities and state departments may also compete against each other, in order to ensure that their needs are prioritised over others. Not unlike the differences between interest groups, state ministers can be expected to wield varying degrees of power and influence. In order for a peak policy group, like Shelter, to influence decision making it is important that the housing minister be influential within her/his own political party and within parliament. Ministers have a role to play in the "championing" of policy ideas to the broader governmental context (Grant 1989: 58). Shelter's ability to influence the policy debate relies on the influence that a particular minister has within the institutions of government. Like interest groups, government departments are also in competition for resources, and Grant argues that each ministry protects its own industry, citing the example of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food protecting and advocating for the interests of agriculture. In this way each ministry can be thought of as individual interest group (Grant 1989: 6).

The power of the Federal Government is another important consideration. The Federal Government has gradually siphoned power from the states, most notably when the Curtin

Labor government persuaded the states to hand over their income tax power to the Commonwealth during the dire situation presented by World War II. The Commonwealth Government continues to encroach on the state levels of government with control over the collection of revenue, including the Goods and Services Tax (GST). Australian federalism has moved from the original design of shared powers between each state and the commonwealth, to a position where "... the states are concerned mainly with the delivery of services, while the Commonwealth supervises the distribution of money and provides some policy co-ordination in so doing" (Singleton et al 1996: 71). The federal housing ministry has provided each state with funds through the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) since 1945. The agreement is a significant example of the power of the federal Government to steer social housing policy in each of the Australian states.

The revised typology does not capture the influence of other Queensland government authorities or federal policy direction. It focuses on the relationship between the ministry and the non-state actor. This research has demonstrated that it is the housing minister who decides whether Shelter is – and whether it remains – an insider group. While theoretically the Queensland premier has the authority to intervene in the relationship between Shelter and the state housing ministry, I found no evidence that this occurred. Nor did I find evidence of any intervention by the Treasury Department, other than Treasury's standard unwillingness to include the budget of any portfolio area. Former housing ministers Tom Burns (1989-1992) and Robert Swarten (1998-2009) enabled Shelter to work as an insider group: while David Watson (1996-1998) limited the engagement of Shelter to that of a peripheral insider. Following the election of the LNP Government led by Campbell Newman in 2012, Shelter became an outsider group.

Problems of a close working relationship

Capture is an issue for peak advocacy groups who have a close working relationship with the government of the day. When an insider group becomes captured it ceases to be influential. Grant (1989) labelled groups which were beholden to governments, 'prisoner groups,' arguing that groups become captured by the government of the day because the ideology of the government and the ideology of the group becomes the same. Governments expect interest groups to offer alternative policy solutions and are willing to listen to alternatives based on evidence. I argue that interest group capture remains relevant. Maloney et al (1994) argued that capture was due to resources rather than ideology. This research points to a greater complexity: a reliance on funding does not necessary mean that

an interest group will simply start singing the same tune as government. The impact of funding agreements on the activities of an interest group is impacted by the political will of the government and/or personality of the minister. If a Minister values independent advice, then a group may be dependent on the resources provided by the government while avoiding advocacy capture.

Shared ideology remains a possibility. Group norms, social and ideological often develop within close working environments: political psychologists refer to this as group think. Group think occurs when "... members' strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action" ('t Hart 2010: 110 paraphrasing Janis 1972). As a research psychologist Janis' pivotal study investigated the problems associated with social cohesion within groups and argued that consensus among individuals may not always lead to the best decision making. Ideological group capture is the product of continued exposure to a closed group in which policy discussions take place.

Insider status can also create challenges and problems with interest group membership. Recognising that some restrictions may be imposed by governments in exchange for funds, Maddison and Edgar argue that this can have detrimental effects on the membership:

... problems arise for advocacy organisations that access political opportunities through collaboration with governments ... while these approaches may have short term gains, by producing 'insider access' to political resources, they run the risk of disrupting connections between advocacy organisations and their grassroots movements, leading to organisational homogenisation and a loss of innovation stimulated from the bottom up (Maddison & Edgar 2008: 11).

Community based policy peaks cannot afford to be captured as this would ostracise their membership but is unlikely that not-for-profit interest groups can gain relational insider status without receiving some financial support from government. This funding provides peaks with the resources they need to employ staff, consult their members, and develop knowledge and policy advice. The ability to retain the capacity to provide critical advice is a well-recognised challenge within the community sector, as well as the literature (Grant 1989, Cheverton 2005, Beyers et al 2008). Government funding signifies acceptance by the government, a recognition that working with this group can provide mutual benefit. There needs to be some ideological consensus to gain either peripheral or relational insider status

but advocacy groups must retain some differences in order to contribute to policy discussions.

Insider status means more than it did when Wyn Grant first developed his typology in the 1970s. Prior to the governance shift, insider status signalled access to decision makers, in today's political climate insider status permits active participation, defined as "relationships that enable government and citizens to share in agenda setting, policy dialogue and the development and evaluation of policy, program and service options" (Queensland Government 2001). This thesis explores insider status as a means to better understanding the participation of interest groups in the development of policy. The revised typology provides a framework through which to analyse the role of Queensland Shelter in the development of social housing policy. In the following chapter I describe the evolution of Queensland Shelter, between 1987 and 2012. This chapter illustrates the impact of the bureaucratisation of the community sector, amid increasing government regulation. Shelter has shifted from using pressure tactics to working with the Queensland government, advocating on behalf of its membership. Firstly, however, I discuss the methodology used within this research.

Chapter Three:

Study of Shelter: voluntary outfit to policy peak

Oral history was instrumental in analysing the role of Shelter in the development of social housing policy in Queensland. Other methods such as document analysis were used to examine relevant material in light of the theoretical framework, the pressure group typology. In the second half of this chapter I describe and analyse the evolution of Shelter from grass roots community organisation to a government funded social housing advocacy peak. I use this discussion to illustrate the ways in which the Board, staff and membership impact on the overall direction of the organisation and the role of the state in enabling Shelter to develop the capacity to provide policy advice. Several days each week between 2011 to 2013 I worked on this thesis from a desk at Shelter's premises at Spring Hill, observing and at times participating in aspects of Shelter work. In order to understand earlier incarnations of Shelter, I rely on interviews and documentation. The study sits within two academic disciplines, history and political science.

Politics and History

The degree of separation between history and politics oscillates, not least because political science has "no agreed approach or method of study" (Stoker and Marsh 2010: 1). Variances can also be attributed to the pervading academic methods of inquiry of the era. The question of whether political inquiry requires historical context, is impacted by the specifics of the research study and the assumptions underpinning the variety of sub-disciplines within both study areas. Separation between the two is minor in political history, for example, as opposed to that in political psychology, where investigation is focussed on individual political behaviour and motivation. Even here, however, history is present – within the discipline of political psychology historical analogy is a causal mechanism used to explain how individuals base their choices on previous events ('t Hart 2010).

The disciplines of history and the study of politics were closely aligned until the study of political institutions was upstaged by behaviourism in the early 20th century. In the last one

hundred years or so since American 'Political Science' became institutionalised, the methods used within the discipline have expanded (Stoker and Marsh 2010). While British scholars continued to be taught political science by historians and philosophers, American scholars began showing less interest in institutional and historical contexts and instead focussed attention on quantitative methods and theoretical models (Kavanagh 1991). While there was a general shift towards scientific study, this did not occur without debate and as the study of politics matured ideas regarding the purpose of political study, the methods used and the scope of study diversified. Political science has become a very broad church, including the study of gender, voting behaviour, party politics, international relations and public policy to name but a few. While some note that the diversity can "give the impression of a subject which lacks a core" (Kavanagh 1991: 479), others argue that multiplicity is a positive:

I am a great believer in pluralism in science. Any direction you proceed in has a very high *a priori* probability of being wrong; so it is good if other people are exploring in other directions – perhaps one of them will be on the right track (Stoker and Marsh 2010: 2 citing Nobel Prize winner Herbert Simon 1992: 21 italics in original).

While research and theoretical diversity may lead to a wider understanding of the political world, it also creates ambiguity. Many of the theories involve contradictory positions regarding both the obtainment of knowledge and the methods used to obtain it. Approaches such as feminism and constructivism, for example, challenge the ontological and methodological assumptions of positivist theories such as behaviourism. While behavioural studies may have rejected history in favour of statistical evidence, other theoretical lenses within the discipline (for example new intuitionism, feminism and constructivism) need history. Crudely put while history may be side-lined in a study which quantifies the preferences of voters, an understanding of gender politics cannot be obtained without historical context. By the latter half of the 1990s an analysis of the outputs of political science demonstrated that "the links with history are still strong, but it is history as a study and record of the past rather than as a method" (Kavanagh 1991: 495).

Kavanagh provides a useful synthesis between the two fields, describing the "historical approach" to political study as:

... studies which systematically describe and analyse phenomena that have occurred in the past and which explain contemporary political phenomena with reference to

past events. The emphasis is on explanation and understanding, not on formulating laws (Kavanagh 1991: 482).

In order to research Shelter's participation in the development of policy I developed an understanding of past events and behaviours in relation to decision making in Queensland. Historical and political methods were employed in order to gain a rich understanding of cultural and structural change impacting on the participation of Shelter within Queensland politics. In order to understand the role that Shelter has played in the development of social housing policy the changing political context over the twenty-five year period is a vital consideration. Without understanding both the history of the organisation and the political history of the era it would be difficult to provide an analysis of why Shelter was either included or prevented from participating at any particular point in time.

While there are similarities between the approaches to historical and political study, there are also distinctions. For some historians the time period (1987-2012) covered in this research is contentious for an historical study, as it is considered far too recent: "...historians, particularly British ones, have argued that study of the present or of the recent past is an inherently impossible enterprise because of the lack of complete written records" (Kavanagh 1991: 479). Difficulty in obtaining documentation is also true of Australian studies. Access to government documentation, such as Cabinet papers may have provided beneficial insight regarding the influence of Shelter on government officials, the nature of decision making and the non-decisions that were canvassed in consideration of an issue. But, due to Cabinet in confidence protocols the records kept within Cabinet are not released for thirty years and as a result the Cabinet discussions regarding the first case study, the establishment of the Rental Bond Authority, will not be available until 2017 and the last of the case studies will not be available until 2047.

A narrative method of inquiry was the overall methodological approach adopted for this thesis. Narrative analysis is useful for understanding complex human interaction and positioning these interactions within broader social, political and economic contexts (Webster & Mertova 2007, Ospina & Dodge 2005). Several research methods were employed to develop the narrative, including semi-structured interviews, ethnography (participant observation) and analysis of documentation. The use of these to examine the varying relationship between Shelter and successive governments of Queensland is explored in the first half of this chapter.

Oral history and elite interviewing

While working on this thesis I was employed part-time by The Centre for the Government of Queensland. With funding support from the Australian Research Council and the Queensland government, the Centre developed *Queensland Speaks*, an oral history project. The project is a historical record of the perceptions and reflections on the governance of Queensland between 1968 and 2008. All interview testimony is available to scholars and the general public via a free website. Former Queensland premiers, ministers and directors-general were interviewed for the project. While working on the project I was involved in writing the interview briefs, constructing the questions and interviewing. I was also employed to time code the material in preparation for the web site, requiring me to listen and re-listen to a great deal of the material.

Oral history emerged as a method which “enabled the uncovering of hidden histories, the stories of people who lives hadn’t been documented and which weren’t in archives, working-class history, women’s history, black history and so on” (Thomson 2008: 96 citing the work of Thompson 1978). From the 1970s the scope of oral history broadened “to include a wider range of communities defined by shared interest or identity ...” (Thomson 2008: 98). Interviewees for *Queensland Speaks* fall into the category of a community of interest. While half of the participants, namely the politicians may have had their work or aspects of their work documented, this was also an opportunity to hear the perspectives of senior public servants.

The *Queensland Speaks* oral history project and my own elite interviews were useful in developing the analysis and understanding the context:

Oral history, or interviews with key participants, while events are still relatively fresh in their minds, has often been found useful for recapturing atmosphere, a quality which no amount of documentation can convey... (Kavanagh 1991: 485).

While there are differences associated with elite interviewing and oral history, any difference in the resulting interview style is largely intangible – especially true if the elite interview is loosely structured. Instead distinctions lie in the purpose of the oral testimony: oral histories seek to record events of a particular time while elite interviewing is used to address particular research questions. Elite interviewing is strongly influenced by the knowledge base and particular interests of the interviewer. Most *Queensland Speaks* interviewers had a deep

knowledge of Queensland politics, and some, including two retired directors-general had participated in public decision making.

I primarily relied on documents and interviews in order to trace the path of each of the case studies. In thinking about the three dimensions of power discussed in the introduction chapter of this thesis, I have studied the decisions made, the alternate policy preferences and framing of issues and the overall assumptions held by stakeholders. While document analysis proved useful some knowledge gaps remained. Interview material was used to understand how a chain of events unfolded. Whiteley and Winyard “suggest that ‘a second-best solution to observing the decision-making process directly’ is to interview participants and obtain their perceptions ...” (1987: 111 cited in Grant 1989: 116). I enjoyed talking with members past and present of the social housing sector, public servants and former ministers. The interviews provided me with both information and prospective explanations I could not have accessed through documents alone. There are nonetheless methodological and reliability issues associated with interviewing. These issues come to the forefront when accounts of events vary between individuals. Oral historians defend their use of interview material claiming that both written and oral accounts of the past are subject to the memory and perception of the individual:

... there is little difference in kind between ‘reported’ accounts of an event after it has happened, whether it is written or recalled orally. Any attempt to give an account of what has happened, whether it be a news report, a letter, diary entry, testimony in the witness box or casual conversation, will be subject to interpretative reconstruction, even if the account is made on the same day as the event described (Douglas, Roberts & Thompson 1988: 21 citing Seldon and Pappworth 1983).

During this research, problems associated with remembering locations, dates or names were either avoided by careful preparation prior to the interview or followed up after the interview. ‘Facts’ such as these are easily checked. More problematic were occasions where individuals perceived the same event differently. An example of this occurred when researching the origins of the Rental Bond Authority (RBA). I discovered that founding members of Shelter and former Queensland public servants held differing views on the role that Shelter played in advocating for the Rental Bond Authority. When this occurred, I triangulated the viewpoints of Shelter representatives, senior public servants and available documentation in order to understand the conflicts and differing opinions. I argue that while Shelter may have contributed to the establishment of the Rental Bond Authority, there were

a number of external factors, separate from Shelter, which also supported its establishment. This is my analysis of the role of Shelter, and I base my arguments on oral testimony, documentation and an understanding of the political context. I discuss the impact of my own subjectivity in a later part of this chapter.

As touched upon earlier, the study relied heavily on oral testimony because while some of the information regarding the formal participation of Shelter was available through a careful analysis of existing documentation, informal participation was not recorded in documentation. The interview testimony revealed, for example, that several public servants agreed that one of the benefits of working with a peak group like Shelter was the ability to get in contact with Shelter staff outside of regular meeting times to informally discuss new policy or program ideas. The importance of informal communication is emphasised throughout the case studies.

For each chapter narrative, documents and interviews were used to examine the participation of Shelter in conjunction with the relationship between the organisation, decision makers and other stakeholders. I used this information to develop a wide understanding of Shelter's role in:

- developing social housing policy
- working with the public service
- developing the Queensland community housing sector
- engaging with external stakeholders

I conducted twenty-one interviews for this research. Time and resources prevented me from interviewing all individuals involved over the last twenty-five years of Shelter history. I was mindful to ensure an even distribution of senior public servants as well as those that were involved with Shelter in the early years and those that joined the organisation at a later date. I also interviewed former housing ministers from both major political parties (see appendix one for a complete list of those interviewed). The first people interviewed for the project were Shelter staff members: Executive Officer, Adrian Pisarski and Operations Manager, Kate Cowmeadow. During that initial interview they suggested that I begin by interviewing one of the founding members of Shelter, Deirdre Coghlan. I interviewed Coghlan several months later.

Around mid-way through my candidature I mentioned to Pisarski in passing that I was having difficulties arranging an interview with former Minister for Housing Robert Swarten.

Pisarski offered to get in touch with Schwarten on my behalf. A few weeks later Schwarten rang me on my mobile to arrange a time for the interview. Pisarski also indicated that I should interview former federal housing minister Tanya Plibersek (2007-10) who was now presiding over the health portfolio. Plibersek's office emailed a polite decline to a member of Shelter's administration team, who subsequently forwarded the email to me:

I have received a request from Adrian Pisarski requesting that Minister Plibersek agree to an interview with Maree Stanley. Unfortunately the Minister receives many thousands of requests for her time and is only able to accept those with direct relevance to the Health portfolio. As Minister Butler has portfolio responsibility for Housing, Adrian's request has been forwarded to him for consideration (Plibersek 2013).

This was the only decline for interview that I received during this project, although two interviewees declined to be recorded. To my knowledge Butler did not respond to the forwarded interview request and I did not follow this up, instead continuing to focus my attention on Queensland policy. Many of the earlier interviews were chosen using the snowballing technique. I simply asked each person I interviewed who I should interview next and then made a judgement about whether they should be interviewed based upon my existing knowledge and knowledge gaps. The interviews varied in length, from forty-five minutes to one and half hours. During the first year of research I develop a timeline which mapped Shelter staff and Board members, senior housing public servants and state and federal housing Ministers. Next I included major changes to social housing policy in Queensland and changes to Shelter's organisational capacity. The map informed the structure of the narrative, assisting in plotting major developments over the twenty-five year period covered in the research. It was also useful in identifying interviewees and developing interview questions. Interview testimony, Shelter documentation and other grey literature, such as government documents and media reports were used to piece together the story. This was an iterative process, these sources were examined in conjunction with conducting interviews. This was time consuming, with interviews held over a two year period.

Participants were very generous with their time, sharing with me their knowledge and experiences. The interviews were semi-structured to enable interviewees to talk about what they thought was important but a short list of questions was prepared in order to ensure that the objectives of the interview were met. In doing this my aim was to "understand the respondent's definition of the situation," but also I was "trying to place that definition in the

context of a theoretically informed research project” (Burnham et al 2008: 241). I was also fortunate to be able to study Shelter from within, enabling me to observe and participate in the culture of a modern policy peak organisation.

Ethnography

Over the course of three years (2011-2013) I worked on my thesis research at Shelter’s offices in Spring Hill. I observed the-day to-day business of Shelter, participated in meetings and wrote articles for various Shelter publications. At times my opinion was sought on issues as they arose and I attended fortnightly Policy and Communication Team (PACT) meetings, quarterly delegate’s meetings, annual general meetings, planning days and on occasion staff meetings. I was provided with a desk and computer which I used on an ad hoc basis.

Ethnography is practiced by a number of disciplines including “anthropology, sociology, management theory, organization (sic) studies and cultural studies ...” (Neyland 2008: 1). It is less commonly used by political scientists which Vromen (2009) describes as unfortunate, arguing that it is a useful tool to study “micro-level processes such as interactions within organizations (sic) and socialization (sic) processes” (Vromen 2009: 261 citing the work of Bray 2008). As a methodology, ethnography:

involves the observation of, and participation in, particular groupings ... This observation and participation aims to engage with questions of how a particular group operates, what it means to be a member of a particular group and how changes can affect that group (Neyland 2008: 1).

Ethnographical studies usually result in a ‘thick’ description which Denzin (1989) describes as those “descriptions that are deep, dense, detailed accounts” as opposed to thin descriptions which “lack detail, and simply report facts (Denzin 1989: 83 cited in Creswell and Miller 2000: 128). I took copious notes while I worked at Shelter, but I would describe my observations on the thin side of thick. It was not my aim to write a complete history of Shelter and its activities. The purpose of the research was to understand the role that Shelter played in the development of public policy and the observations I made were useful to understand the current culture and work practices of the organisation.

While working as a participant observer at Shelter, I analysed and sorted all notes taken into themes which included Shelter’s current priorities, culture and daily routine. In doing this I was able to develop an understanding of the current organisational culture, tasks and responsibilities. I was then able to compare these notes to my understanding of other eras

within Shelter's history. Information gathered during this participant observation was also used to inform interview questions. How did the experiences of the current Shelter organisation differ from that in the past? How had the culture of Shelter shifted in its twenty-five year history? My observations aided me to develop an understanding regarding the shifting role of Shelter during its twenty-five year history.

There are issues associated with "getting close" to people while conducting an ethnographic study (Neyland 2008: 16). Neyland uses the terms insider and outside to describe the position of the researcher in relation to those being researched, but argues that these are not: "absolute positions – as the research develops, at times the ethnographer will be more 'inside' and at other members more 'outside' the organization (sic)" (Neyland 2008: 17). Neyland succinctly describes the role of the ethnographer as one that:

... shifts between being 'in' of the organization (sic) (actively participating in what is going on) and being 'out' of the organization (sic) (writing and reviewing observations and taking these into account when observing further aspects of organizational (sic) activity (Neyland 2008: 17).

This mirrors my own experience, at times I was included, and at others I observed rather than participated. While I was never dismissed or viewed as an outsider, nor was I on the payroll, so I didn't ever get involved in administrative issues. I was included in morning teas, social events such as the annual Christmas party and staff birthday cake celebrations. At times I wondered about the risk of 'capture' by the organisation.

Oral historian Valerie Yow (1995) reflects on the issue of 'unconscious advocacy'²¹ during interviews she conducted during an oral history project with a psychiatric hospital. Reflecting on her representation and analysis of interview testimony. Yow writes:

But the question I ask myself now is whether I approached the recorded testimony in a sufficiently critical manner, since I liked the individuals, respected the work the hospital does, and would not have wanted to publish anything that might harm the reputation of this work community. I would have viewed conscious suppression of information as unethical, of course, but my feelings may have unconsciously influenced my research questions and my handling of evidence (Yow 1995: 56).

²¹ Carl Ryant (1990) refers to this as 'good-will advocacy', cited in Yow 1995.

Yow's reflections resonate with my work. I too liked and respected the work of Shelter staff and Board members. Prior to starting with Shelter, my thesis supervisor had suggested that Shelter might make an interesting case study, fitting with my research interests of interest group participation in public policy. He was a member of the Board and acted as a gate keeper, introducing me to the Chairperson of the Shelter Committee, Wynn Hopkins. While my supervisor actively encouraged critical engagement at all times, I was conscious of my relationships with Shelter staff and other individuals I had met for interviews. Like Yow, at times I wondered if I was sufficiently critical during interviews and of the material I had collected while based at the Shelter. At various times I reflected on my ability to remain objective, as I developed a growing respect for the work of those within the social housing sector.

In another of Yow's articles published in the *Oral History Review*, the author examines the effects of the interview on both the interviewer and the interviewee, posing the rhetorical question of "do I like them too much?" (Yow 1997). Yow argues that both positive and negative impressions "influence the ways we ask questions and respond to narrators and interpret and evaluate what they say" (Yow 1997: 78). Reflecting on these impressions and understanding your own position within the research by integrating the questions, responses and analysis of interview material is necessary in order to understand how internal bias might impact on the research. In order to create awareness within the researcher, Yow provides a useful set of questions:

1. What am I feeling about this narrator?
2. What similarities and what differences impinge on this interpersonal situation?
3. How does my own ideology affect this process? What group outside of the process am I identifying with?
4. Why am I doing the project in the first place?
5. In selecting topics and questions, what alternatives might I have taken? Why didn't I choose these?
6. What other possible interpretations are there? Why did I reject them?
7. What are the effects on me as I go about this research? How are my reactions impinging on the research? (Yow 1997: 79).

My use of these questions was not confined to the interview process. I used these questions to reflect on many aspects of the PhD project. An additional consideration for this research was the inclusion and/or exclusion of material used to write the thesis. As described in earlier

paragraphs of this chapter there are differences between history and political science. While Yow was mainly concerned with the questions she asked (or didn't ask) during the oral history interview, I also had to be mindful of how I used the material following the interview. An oral history interview is not usually subjected to editing²² but the difference between my research and an oral history project was that I was using parts of the interviews to address specific research questions. As I made judgements on what was relevant to the purpose of the research, I excluded some interviewee material while focusing on others.

The interviews conducted specifically for this research were not transcribed. In keeping with the methodology used within the *Queensland Speaks* research project and website each interview was thematically analysed, summarised and time coded (see Miller & Stanley 2012, Stanley 2010). I started with an outcome (major policy reform) and then worked backwards examining the role of Shelter and its relationship with the government of the day. This type of analysis is referred to as path dependency (Neuman 2006).

Webster and Mertova (2007: 93) argue that there are challenges to ensuring the validity and reliability of narrative inquiry research. "However, for narrative, it can be neither expected nor assumed that the outcomes from one narrative or a collection of stories will consistently return the same views or outcomes." Despite these concerns it is a useful methodology for examining complex relationships such as that between Shelter and the government of the day.

"Narrative inquiry attempts to capture the 'whole story', whereas other methods tend to communicate understandings of studied subjects or phenomena at certain points, but frequently omit the important 'intervening' stages" (Webster & Mertova 2007: 3).

Both reliability and validity can be improved by ensuring "accuracy and accessibility of the data" (Webster & Mertova 2007:93). Accessibility to data makes it possible for the reader to access primary sources in order to make a judgement on the reliability of the narrative. All interviews conducted as part of the *Queensland Speaks* oral history project are available to the public via the website. I used a categorised bibliography to ensure the location of primary and secondary material is clear to the reader. The interviews conducted specifically for this research are not publicly available, but remain in the possession of the author. Sometime after beginning this research I became aware of the *Australian Data Archive*. In replicating

²² Sometimes interviews are edited, for example if comments made by the interviewee are harmful to either themselves or others but editing is not considerable desirable in recording history (Yow 1995)

this type of research I would encourage researchers to consider archiving their qualitative data both as a means of strengthening the reliability and validity of the narrative analysis and to contribute to the collection for use by other researchers. The researcher would need to ensure that permission to store and share the research is given by all research participants prior to the start of the research process.

Aside from working within the offices at Shelter I was also fortunate to spend some time working within a department of the Queensland Public Service. Towards the end of my candidature I applied for a role with a pilot program of PhD work placements. The program provided students with the opportunity to develop some experience and insight into work within the public service. I mention this role briefly here because although this role was not part of the research project, the experience coloured the way in which I viewed the role of public servants in the development of public policy. Members of the public service are often asked to provide policy briefs – with an emphasis on brief. Ministers are busy, unlikely to read long winded documents especially if complex and public servants have to convey necessary information in a format that does not take too long to read. It is necessary therefore that public servants, usually as members of a team, make judgements on what material is necessary and what is not. Despite interviewing several senior public servants as well as extensively listening to the interviews with *Queensland Speaks* participants, I had overlooked the importance of the bureaucrat's influence in public decision making. For an advocacy peak a relationship with public servants, especially those who provide advice to Ministers is pivotal. The experience of working on placement for two months with the Queensland Government led to some revision of my ideas around the relationship between Shelter and the public service. While I had an understanding of the role of the public service to provide advice to the Minister, I had underplayed the importance of the relationship between Shelter and senior department staff and the opportunity that discussions with senior staff provides in steering and shaping policy direction.

Documentation and Content Analysis

I was fortunate to have the full support of the Shelter board and staff for the duration of the project. I had open access to all the available archival documentation and shared files on the computer system, with the exception of Shelter Board minutes. Unfortunately many of Shelter's records were destroyed by a flood caused by a burst pipe. What remained, however, was useful in order to support interview testimony and also as method for deciding who to interview. My semi regular attendance at the Shelter office helped me to learn the

industry jargon. There are many, many acronyms used to refer to organisations, policies and programs, some of which are included in the abbreviation list at the start of this thesis.

The research used primary and secondary documentation to build the historical narrative. It was helpful to think about the documents in these terms, in order to mitigate some of the issues associated with reliability.

Table 5: Primary, secondary and tertiary sources used within this research

Primary Sources	Shelter documentation Shelter database Hansard Queensland Government documents Queensland Political Chronicles The Courier-Mail Brisbane Times Queensland Government media releases Shelter media releases Shelter Yearbooks Shelter Newsletters Media releases
Secondary Sources	Books PhD Theses Journal Articles

Not unlike interview testimony, there is uncertainty associated with documentation research, “Since reality is constructed and experienced in so many different ways, determining what *actually* happened in any final sense is an aspiration impossible to achieve” (Gamble 2002: 142 emphasis in original). These authors however provide some reassurance:

However, careful use of a wide range of documentary material is one of the most reliable methods open to the political researcher and provides an opportunity for the production of authoritative studies, even if the ‘definitive account’ remains just out of reach (Burnham et al 2008: 212).

In order to assess whether Shelter remained constructively critical throughout the Beattie Government period I collated copies of all of Queensland Shelter’s media submissions. I manually coded each of the media releases, highlighting criticisms and commendations made of the Beattie Government in each of the releases. Some submissions did not provide

commentary on the Beattie Government and a small number commented on the federal government but the majority of the media releases were categorised as 'neither'. The majority of these promoted Shelter activity, aiming to draw public attention to social housing issues. The mixed category refers to submissions which made both positive and negative comments regarding Beattie government policy. For example "Queensland Shelter welcomes the State Government's changes to the Residential Tenancy Act [positive], yet remain concerned as to the enforceability of the laws [negative]" (Queensland Shelter 2008).

While a range of documentation was analysed to build knowledge of the case studies, it was not useful as a sole method for determining the role of Shelter in policy development. In later chapters where I argue that Shelter was an insider group, and therefore highly involved, documentation alone did not illustrate the informal interaction that Shelter had with both the Minister and the department staff. Technology also plays a part in reducing the amount of formal documentation: "Not all significant activities are recorded or filed, the telephone has almost certainly reduced the importance of letter-writing and some sensitive documents are held back" (Kavanagh 1991: 484). The rise and rise of email communication has provided another challenge for researchers. Very few individuals or organisations properly archive their emails, which are often lost forever when there is a changeover of computers and/or staff, let alone a change in the governing political party.

These are the methods that were used to develop each of the case studies and to analyse the shifting role that Shelter played in the development of housing policy over a twenty-five year period. The remaining portion of this chapter provides an overview of the organisation from its early days as a community group to its role as a peak advocacy organisation for the social housing sector in Queensland.

Shelter: Early Beginnings

Australian Shelter organisations originated from a model operating in the United Kingdom. Shelter England formed in 1966, developing through general citizen interest in housing stress following the showing of *Cathy Come Home* on British TV as part of the Wednesday Play Series (Queensland Shelter England 2013, IMDB 2009-2014). The film examined the British welfare system through the story of young couple Cathy and Reg who lose their family home following an accident which prevents Reg from working. They become homeless and the final harrowing shots show the removal of Cathy's children by social services staff at a train station. Twelve million people watched the film on the first showing, leading to

increased attention on housing and homelessness. Shot in 'documentary drama' style by leftist director Ken Loach, the film portrayed Cathy and Reg as an everyday couple. The ability of this drama to present homelessness as something that could happen to 'ordinary' citizens contributed to the impact of the film (Pisarski 2011 interview by author). While Hill (2011) argued that comments made on the UK welfare system as part of the film were more fiction than fact, the film resonated with people, successfully framing homelessness as a possibility for many, if not all, citizens. There is no Australian feature film or documentary that has ever had such an impact on attitudes to housing stress.

The Castle (1997), for example, a well-constructed comedy, supported the status quo, the dominance of home ownership as the Australian dream and the capacity of the Australian Constitution to protect the Aussie battler from evil business corporations. This Australian film did not challenge any of the existing structures, with little impact on current policy. While *The Delinquents* (1989)²³ depicted housing stress, this was a retrospective view of the Australian welfare state in the 1950s, ineffective in setting the current policy agenda. *Samson & Delilah* (2009) could be classed as a documentary drama, telling the story of two Indigenous youths who sleep rough for part of the film, but it seemed too far removed from everyday life to have much impact on community understandings of how widespread homelessness was booming.

'Shelters' in Australia were established in New South Wales and Tasmania in 1975 (Shelter NSW: ND, Shelter TAS: ND). Shortly after the establishment of these, The Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) were successful in persuading the Whitlam federal government to fund National Shelter in early 1975 (QCOSS 1976). South Australia and Western Australia followed, both opening in 1979 (Shelter WA: 2003, Shelter SA 2013). Both Australian territories were without a Shelter organisation until 1996 (ACT Shelter 2012 & NT Shelter ND).

The exact date of the emergence of a Shelter organisation in Queensland is unclear.²⁴ Groups first operated under the banner of Queensland Shelter during the 1970s but activity was inconsistent:

²³ The film is based on the book by Crienda Rohan published in 1962 but rereleased in 1989 to coincide with the movie release.

²⁴ The organisation has been referred to as SHELTER, Shelter, Shelter Queensland, and occasionally South Shelter. From the late 1980s referred to as Queensland Shelter, Q Shelter and/ or Shelter.

Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, its members would come together and organise around particular issues which were of concern to its members, and then after a time would become inactive as the issue passed and other concerns became more urgent (Queensland Shelter circa 1991).

Similar to the role played by ACOSS in the development of National Shelter, the Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS) was involved in early incarnations of the state Shelter branch by “facilitating the participation of Queensland consumer groups at state and national levels” (QCOSS 1975). Members of QCOSS were successful in bring together community groups from Brisbane, Mackay, Rockhampton, Townsville, Cairns and Mt Isa. Many of the issues that this early ‘Shelter’ group were considering would not be out of place on today’s policy agenda:

- public housing
- lack of rental accommodation and the rights of tenants
- special needs and emergency accommodation
- alternative purchase arrangements
- housing policy, with respect to city zoning, caravan parks
- co-operatives (QCOSS 1975).

QCOSS developed other housing related working groups during this period , the Homeless Person Working group, designed to “act as an open forum and for the exchange of information, to develop the consumer in-put into agencies concerned with homelessness” (QCOSS 1976). At around the same time, a drop-in centre for people experiencing homelessness in Brisbane opened at 139 Charlotte St in the Brisbane CBD.²⁵

From 1975 the QCOSS *Annual Report* included a report on Shelter activities. In 1975 ACOSS was provided funding by the Federal Department of Housing and Construction to employ Anne Cross who was “appointed as Co-ordinator to help develop the programme in Queensland” (QCOSS 1976).²⁶ In 1976 Cross established a state wide Shelter steering committee with members tasked with collecting information from their area in order to develop policy ideas. Cross also attended the 1976 National Shelter conference in Canberra

²⁵ The 139 club was still operating in 2015, although has long since relocated to 505 Brunswick Street in Fortitude Valley (139 Club Website 2015).

²⁶ This funding was short lived, “Since the end of November 1975, funds have not been available for the employment of a Co-ordinator, however enough money was available to hold a small national meeting ... and a national newsletter (QCOSS 1976: 21).

between the 9 and 10th August, in which she reported on the activities of Shelter. Following the conference there was a flurry of activity in Queensland, the Housing Commission Tenants Groups were established in Inala, submissions were presented to State parliament regarding “Landlord-Tenancy Legislation” as the group attempted “to influence legislation into greater protection of tenants in areas such as bond money and eviction orders” (QCOSS 1976: 22). State based seminars and conferences were held in Brisbane and Rockhampton.

Money that had been made available by the Whitlam government soon ran out and although it was the intention of Shelter members to continue to meet, priorities were stretched:

Several of the local groups are still continuing to meet and information is being collected through an informal link-up but the formal Shelter organisation is now non-existent due to lack of money and personnel (QCOSS 1976: 22).

It was several years until the QCOSS executive prioritised the re-establish of a Shelter organisation in Queensland – the reasons for this are not explicit, but housing affordability issues had continued to grow in Queensland, as in other states. Members of QCOSS hoped that this new Shelter committee members would include “welfare personnel, builders, architects, town planners and so on” (QCOSS 1979: 12). Getting people involved in Shelter at this time was difficult:

... the people working in the housing field have large time commitments to the activities of their own agencies, and they find it difficult to allot the time to take on further responsibilities (QCOSS 1979: 12).

In 1982 Shelter was still experiencing low levels of resources and at this time energies were conserved, as demonstrated by the decision by members to “concentrate on addressing housing issues as part of the destruction of community affecting inner city suburbs ...” (QCOSS 1981: 4). At this time, a subgroup of Shelter developed to address issues regarding the Housing Commission. This group focussed on “matters related to quality of life of Housing Commission tenants and Housing Commission policy, with particular regard to the availability of rental accommodation for poor people” (QCOSS 1981: 4).

Interest and support for a shelter organisation throughout this period waxed and waned. In 1982 the coordinator of Shelter, Alan Hasler passed away on the 13th September, aged only 44. QCOSS included a memoriam notice acknowledging Hasler’s contributions to Shelter and the community sector: “His efforts on behalf of SHELTER, and his personal contribution to QCOSS, are sadly missed” (QCOSS 1982).

Other community groups with an interest in housing were also operating during this period. The Catholic Social Welfare Committee hosted a housing forum in May of 1982. The forum was co-sponsored by QCOSS and titled, *Behind the Boom: Housing Queenslander in the 1980s*. As Deirdre Coghlan, lifetime member of Queensland Shelter explained resources were limited:

In the early 80s ... there were no housing workers in Queensland, no housing workers whatsoever. There was a few workers in the Churches, a few neighbourhood centres that were not funded ... from any government department ... but there was ... social action ... coming from the people (Coghlan 2011 interview by the author).

In 1983 National Shelter provided a “small grant” so that Queensland Shelter could develop a policy document (Shelter Queensland 1983²⁷). This money was used to employ Barbara Miller part-time: Miller was also working at QCOSS (Queensland Council of Social Services). The grant money enabled Miller, with input from the housing sector to develop Shelter’s housing policy, published as a booklet, titled *Why Profit from Housing?* On the 27th August Shelter hosted a meeting to amend and ratify the policy document before it was disseminated. The policy document was then “amended ... [and] submitted for typesetting, and will be printed and circulated to all politicians and groups concerned with housing before the State elections” (Wiman 1983). Following the development of the 1983 policy platform there is no evidence of any formal activity from Shelter. QCOSS, however, remained involved in housing and homelessness issues (QCOSS 1985) as did churches and other community interest groups.

The Hawke Labor Government was also encouraging the growth and development of housing cooperatives, through the Local Government and Community Housing Program (Queensland Shelter circa 1991). QCOSS employed a project worker for a six week period to help local organisations develop viable funding submissions in order to become a housing co-operatives. Several housing co-operatives were funded in the 1984/85 period, including the Woolloowin/Albion/Windsor Housing Co-operative, Spring Hill Co-operative, Red Hill/Paddington Community Housing Group, East Brisbane Community Centre as well as Rockhampton and Townsville. QCOSS reported that “for the first time, community based and tenant managed housing has become a reality in Queensland” (QCOSS 1985). Rose

²⁷ Around this time SHELTER was referred to as Shelter.

Wiseman, Housing Project Officer with QCOSS, noted that the Queensland community sector was ill-equipped to:

... take on the sorts of tasks and responsibilities as were implied in the principles of the L.G.A.C.H.P [Local Government and Community Housing Program] as desirable as these may have been for solving some of the housing problems in this State (Wiseman 1986: 28).

During the late 1980s, there were plenty of issues associated with housing that a group; such as Shelter could draw upon. The United Nations declared that 1987 would be the International Year of Housing and Shelter for the Homeless due to the numbers of people worldwide living in slums:

... despite the efforts of governments at the national and local levels and of international organizations (sic), the living conditions of the majority of the people in slums and squatter areas and rural settlements, especially in developing countries, continue to deteriorate in both relative and absolute terms ... (UN: 1982).

The aim of the UN was to raise the profile of shelter for those experiencing homelessness and to ensure:

... renewed political commitment by the international community to the improvement of the shelter and neighbourhoods of the poor and disadvantaged, and to the provision of shelter for the homeless, particularly in the developing countries, as a matter of priority (UN: 1982).

Within Brisbane preparations for World Expo '88 had escalated existing housing affordability issues to crisis point. While it is sometimes argued that large public events have a positive effect on overall economic conditions, for some people Expo '88 caused significant housing stress. The development of the vast infrastructure required to host Expo had a direct impact on people living in the area. The existing homes on the site, mostly low cost rental houses, were demolished under resumption laws which provide remuneration for the home's owners but forced tenants to move.

Elsewhere in Brisbane and surrounding areas demand for housing, particularly rental housing, was extremely high and this forced rental and sale prices up. Media reports indicate that some landlords were cashing in on this demand, evicting tenants so that their vacant properties could be tenanted by high paying Expo visitors. The University of Queensland

reported that some students discontinued their enrolment because they were unable to secure affordable accommodation. Caravan parks reached full occupancy and there was a critical lack of accommodation in Woodridge, Logan City, Springwood, Daisy Hill and surrounding areas. When Prime Minister Hawke visited the Expo site in early 1988, protestors greeted him demanding that both the Federal and State government spend more on public housing (*South Coast Daily* 1988).



Illustration 4: Sussex Street squat, West End Queensland

(Photo: Mark Allen circa 1988).

During the course of my research, I serendipitously met Mark Allen. At the time of Expo '88 Allen was an Honours Student and was also working on a social and economic impact report for the Southside Urban Research Group (SURG). Illustration 4 is a photograph taken by him of a squat in Sussex Street, West End. The dwelling had previously been divided into 12 units and was housing a number of families who had recently migrated to Australia. These families (all private market tenants) were evicted on the premise that significantly increased rents could be charged during Expo. The mass eviction “triggered a squat action that lasted for about 6 months to highlight the issue. It attracted a lot of media (and police) attention at the time” (Allen 2015).

The State government responded to housing issues incurred due to Expo '88 by establishing The Expo Housing Hotline. This telephone hotline was specifically created to take calls from

people who believed that they were being forced to leave to enable landlords to make money from high paying tourists. Minister for Family Services, Welfare and Housing Peter McKechnie told the Queensland Parliament:

I want people to ring in if they feel they have been unfairly evicted or if they have been on the receiving end of unrealistic rent increases... There is every chance that those people who are evicting tenants only for the duration of Expo may come a cropper” (*The Courier-Mail* 1988).

Later the hotline expanded to provide a more comprehensive service for those dealing with housing issues, as well as collecting data on housing stress in Brisbane:

The Housing Hotline did research ... they kept data on their own calls and then they'd match that with other bits of data that they could get their hands on and did some quite good reports. As well as obviously spending a lot of time helping people (Eastgate 2013 interview by the author).

Expo '88 continued for six months and it is estimated that it received over eighteen million visits, though many were repeat visits from locals who bought a multi-visit pass. When the exhibition finished in October of 1988 the area was redeveloped by the newly created Southbank Corporation.

Housing stress exacerbated by Expo' 88, the subsequent development of the Housing Hotline and The International Year of Shelter for the Homeless helped to put housing firmly on the political agenda. These events occurred during a period of political turmoil in Queensland. The Fitzgerald inquiry into corruption, National Party leadership spills and increasing demand for political reform created the perfect storm for major change. Pressure groups that were well organised, with informed ideas on policy would soon have the opportunity to walk through the open door that had replaced the former brick wall.

Grassroots Organisation (1987-1991)

This period of change and prolonged attention on housing and homelessness issues sparked a renewal in Shelter activity in 1987 (Eastgate 2013 interview by the author). Members of the social welfare sector were brought together by shared concerns regarding housing:

In 1987 Shelter arose from a group of concerned housing activists who realised that individual housing workers couldn't change things on their own, that they needed to

get together to share information and develop strategies for a better response” (Morgan-Thomas 1997a).

In response to the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH), the IYSH committee formed to “raise awareness of housing issues around the state.” Membership of the IYSH committee included “supported accommodation workers, QCOS, and Catholic Housing Working Party staff, LGCH [Local Government and Community Housing Project], architects, students and academics” (Coghlan circa 2012). The committee wound up at the end of 1987 but some members decided to continue to raise awareness under the banner of Queensland Shelter (Queensland Shelter circa 1990a, Eastgate 2013 interview by the author). As Coghlan writes, “People and organisations were invited to become members and it was with these subscriptions that Qld Shelter used to spread the word” (circa 2012). After the IYSH, a small group set up some ‘road shows’ and travelled around Queensland educating people on housing and homelessness issues (Eastgate 2012, Queensland Shelter circa 1990a).

Shelter membership in the formation years was fairly fluid and informal; resources were few and far between. Shelter did not receive funding from any government, relying on donations and later paid membership fees. “No funding of any sort came at this stage ... from the state ... The chook raffles were a weekly thing” (Coghlan 2011 interview by the author). Jon Eastgate, recalls how the group “gradually rebuilt” from early incarnations:

... thanks to the enthusiasm of some new people, particularly Deirdre Coghlan, who replaced Helen at the Catholic Social Welfare Commission, a number of people who worked in Brisbane's homelessness sector, and a young architecture student who became our treasurer and took care of our bank account which steadily rose to the heady sum of \$600” (Eastgate 2012).

As many of the members were also working with other organisations in both paid and voluntary capacities there was a fluidity within the Queensland Shelter group.

After the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, there had been this kind of burst of energy but then there was no resources ... At one stage I remember having a meeting with four people at Rosemary Grundy’s house.... It was almost, you know, is this going to die? Can we keep it going? ... (Eastgate 2013 interview by the author).

Physical resources were extremely limited; those involved with Shelter at this time relied on innovation and commitment to continue their focus on improving housing outcomes. Eastgate explains how one member of Shelter designed a logo: “Helen Wallace ... designed us a logo based on the National Shelter one. Theirs showed two human figures in a tiny house. Helen carefully whited (sic) them out and replaced them with two tiny pineapples” (Eastgate 2012). Without any government funding, “someone brought the milk, someone brought the tea ...” (Coghlan 2011 interview by the author). Roles within Shelter were at this time fairly ad hoc, with people taking it in turns to perform key committee positions.

Next Meeting Tuesday, 10 July, 1990. 1.00pm at West End
Community House.

Chairperson and minute taker for next meeting to be decided
then – you might be the lucky one – come along and 'vie' for
these jobs!!

Illustration 5: Excerpt from Shelter Committee minutes 12 June 1990

(Queensland Shelter 1990b).

In 1990 Shelter committee members used the \$600 held in the Shelter account to employ housing resource worker, Pam Burke (Eastgate 2012). With limited funds Burke was employed for an initial 40 hours of work, carefully prioritised by the Shelter committee including the production of a Shelter leaflet, drafting the aims of Shelter and preparing and disseminating meeting minutes. The key aims of Shelter during this period were:

- Providing information on housing to the community
- Maintaining and developing the networks that link into Shelter.
- Co-ordinating with other agencies, including advocacy and lobbying.
- Supporting and developing appropriate responses at the State and National levels to housing need and policies as identified by local and regional organizations ... (sic). (Queensland Shelter circa 1990a: 6).

Community participation was a core principle underpinning the work of the Shelter committee members. In addition membership provided much needed funds. While sector consultation is never an easy proposition, technology in those days added to the challenges, without the internet Shelter relied on teleconferences and faxes to communicate and encourage feedback. In 1990 a hand written note was faxed (recipients unknown) to presumably interested parties in order to increase membership numbers, see illustration 6.

HAVE YOU JOINED
SHELTER ?

SHELTER HAS NO RESOURCES -
YOUR MEMBERSHIP FEE WILL KEEP
YOU ON THE MAILING LIST!

PLEASE JOIN NOW IF YOU
WISH TO KEEP IN TOUCH
THROUGH SHELTER MAIL OUTS.

THANKS.

Illustration 6: Shelter correspondence, cover page

(Shelter circa 1990)

In 1991 Shelter received funding (from the Goss Labor Government) in order to employ its first staff. Eleri Morgan-Thomas was appointed by the Shelter Management committee as the first paid coordinator and Madonna Bowman became the first administration worker. Committee members were also successful in applying for funding, in order to host a first state-wide Shelter conference.

Funded Community Advocacy (1992-2006)

The first conference was held in Townsville in August of 1992. The majority of the two hundred attendees were either community workers, public housing tenants or representatives from government (Queensland Shelter 1992a: 1). The conference was co-funded through the housing and health government portfolios. Some of the conference funding was used to appoint a conference organiser, Lyn Luxford. The conference was an opportunity to disseminate information among housing workers, tenants and government workers, and used as an avenue to “set the direction of work for Shelter” (Leeks 1993: 2). The administrative structure and policy advocacy goals of Shelter formed part of the conference agenda with participants given “an opportunity to develop and ratify aims of Shelter and to formally establish a management structure and process for the organisation”

(Queensland Shelter 1992a: 1). A number of resolutions were carried at the conference, illustrating the diversity and complexity within the housing sector in conjunction with Shelter's commitment to represent the social housing sector.

Prior to receiving government funding, Shelter demonstrated an awareness of the possible problems associated with receiving money from outside sources. An early newsletter stated that as Shelter was not "funded and is not affiliated with any religious, political or other organisation, this enables members a great deal of freedom and autonomy in discussions and action" (Queensland Shelter N.D: 1)

After receiving government funding in 1991 from the Goss Labor Government, newly appointed Shelter coordinator, Eleri Morgan-Thomas, noted the difficulties in representing the sector to government and the government to the sector:

Quite clearly Mr Burns [Minster for Housing] and the department see Shelter as having dual roles as both a community voice and as a voice for the department. How we reconcile these sometimes conflicting roles remains to be seen" (Queensland Shelter 1991b: 3).

In a 'letter to editor' page of a 1991 Shelter newsletter, one Shelter member wrote of the importance of remaining independent and free from government funding. Citing Shelter's early hand-written draft of aims and objectives, Lillian Geddes suggested that Shelter pursue funding through non-government means, specifying trade unions, churches, the Master Building Association, Myer Foundation and friendly societies, writing:

I do not know of any other group in Queensland who have specifically taken a stand against applying for Government Funding (sic), and I am hoping that Shelter Queensland takes this issue up as a SPECIFIC part of your/our identity."... "Yours in Peace – Lillian Geddes" (Geddes 1991: 2 cited in Shelter 1991b, emphasis in original).

Geddes' letter received a response from Deirdre Coghlan in the following newsletter, describing the challenges over the last "ten years or so" when Shelter had not received any government funding.

During that time, Shelter had total autonomy but it could not hope to represent anyone other than the individuals who were involved. Without funds to organise mailouts (sic), and time to analyse policy Shelter was always on the back foot. During that time

Shelter was influential in a number of areas. Some submissions were even acted on! However, everything we did was through alternate (and definitely informal) means. Those of us who were active and were lucky enough to have jobs in the community sector used the resources available to us. Unfortunately this meant the redirection of resources from other areas (Coghlan 1992 cited in Queensland Shelter January 1992a: 2).

In this same response Coghlan argues Shelter should continue to receive funding from the Department of Housing and Local Government while at the same time ensure both the Department and the Minister were clear regarding the role of shelter:

If the issue is independence from government processes then maybe we, as an organisation, need to make it clear to the Department that they do not own us. Just because they pay the bills doesn't mean that Shelter is necessarily a puppet of DHLG [Department of Housing & Local Government].Maybe it means that we have to take up the initiative and set the parameters for DHLG involvement (Coghlan 1991 cited in Queensland Shelter 1992a: 2)

Geddes responded to Coghlan's letter in the next edition of the newsletter in March 1992. Quoting a portion of Coghlan's letter in which Coghlan had written: "Shelter really only exists because there is a housing department", Geddes replied:

"I so much wish this line would have read "Shelter exists because there is a housing need, and Shelter works with the department because it is a major player in responding to this need" (Geddes 1992 cited in Shelter 1992b: 2).

Throughout the twenty-five year period that this thesis covers, Shelter remained aware of the need to retain advocacy autonomy from the government. Analysis and discussion of this issue occurs in chapters five through to nine, where a critique of the relationship between Shelter and the government of the day is discussed in detail.

An early priority of Shelter was to establish an organisational structure which would draw in wider participation from regional areas of Queensland. Morgan-Thomas recalls that areas of Queensland outside of the South-East were concerned that they did not have representation. Shelter had unsuccessfully tried to persuade the government to fund more than one Shelter office but as Morgan-Thomas explained:

As I remember it, the people in Townsville and Cairns were very concerned, I mean this is the story of Queensland, very concerned about missing out on things. They thought that there should be two organisations one for south east Queensland and one for them ... The department had very wisely decided not to do that ... they only wanted one, provided with sufficient money (Morgan-Thomas 2013 interview by the author).

In order to ensure representation of regional Queensland, Shelter developed a regionally-based branch structure. Morgan-Thomas attributes this structure to her background in community development:

At lot of it [early Shelter work] was about how we would run an organisation that had a state-wide focus and was inclusive and all those sorts of things, but do that from Brisbane ... we set up branches and the ability for them [the branches] to apply for a small pocket of money to do a bit of local type research that could feed into a state-wide agenda ... (Morgan-Thomas 2013 interview by the author).

Each branch elected a delegate, who attended Shelter meetings and telephone conferences regularly in order to report on their region and communicate back to their branch after the meeting. Shelter provided some funds to each branch so that local areas could develop and implement project work in their own area. Much of the project work undertaken by Shelter during the 1990s relied heavily on the branch network. This structure enabled Shelter to be represented in local communities around Queensland. The branch structure also provided Shelter with the knowledge needed to represent regions within the state.

Former Shelter Coordinator, Roksana Khan credits Morgan-Thomas for developing the branch structure and “linking delivery and policy together at the ground level” (Khan 2013 interview by the author). Wynn Hopkins, former Shelter Delegate for Cairns during the 1990s (and later Chair of the Shelter management committee) recalls the value of the branch structure in ensuring representation:

That was one of the reasons that I found Queensland Shelter really valuable was because of the branch structure and because of the input you got from all the various viewpoints and the various areas. It used to be so supportive and interesting to hear how people were managing and struggling in say Bundaberg or ... Mt Isa, or wherever (Hopkins 2014 interview by the author).

In addition, to aid in regional representation it is a convention (not a formal role of the constitution) that the Vice-Chairperson of Shelter reside in either Townsville or Cairns to ensure balance of representation between regional areas and the south east corner (Hopkins 2014 interview by the author).

The number of branches has fluctuated over the twenty-five year history. In 1996 there were seven branches in Queensland. Around one third of all members were also branch members.²⁸ The nature of branches varies, while the majority in 1996 were geographically based other branches have formed out of a special interest.²⁹ Whether brought together by location or special interest each branch will have its own history and policy focus. I include a very brief history of two of the branches in the following paragraphs to illustrate the role of Shelter branches in different locations.

Mackay Housing Interest Network

The Mackay Housing Interest Network began operations in 1992, and membership is made up of local and regional people whose main interest is housing. Because of the nature of a network, the membership was very informal and floating, with people having the ability to come in and out as their need saw fit.

The Housing Interest Network has been very successful over those years, with people liking very much the ability to float in and out. However, it was also recognised that there was a need in our community for a structure which could successfully see more houses on the ground as well.

As part of our evolution, the Mackay Housing Interest Network made a formal decision in May, 1994 to become the Mackay branch of Queensland Shelter and we have progressed since then (Queensland Shelter 1996: 8).

Branch membership enabled the Mackay Housing Interest group to apply for a Shelter branch grant. The funds were used to host a workshop to discuss (and produce a report) on the development of a housing association in the area.

²⁸ In 1996 Shelter had 178 individual and organisational members. A breakdown of membership was not recorded.

²⁹ In 1996 five of the branches were based on location and included Far North Queensland, Brisbane Inner City, Gold Coast and Hinterland Housing Network, MacKay Housing Interest Network, Redlands Housing Focus Group, while one was a special interest, "The Independents".

Brisbane Inner City Housing

Brisbane Inner City branch was established in May 1994. The group has a broad focus on monitoring the impacts of gentrification and social change including government involvement in inner city development projects and the impacts on boarding houses and private rental and traditional residences of the inner city area.

Last year [1995] the branch successfully applied for funding from Brisbane City Council to conduct research into boarding house issues in the inner city. The project consisted of 2 parts. The first part was a study of existing boarding houses and the views of people living in them. This provides an important study of who lives in boarding houses and why. The second part of the project was concerned with law reform and looked at the inclusion of boarders and lodgers in residential tenancies and other legislation (Queensland Shelter 1996: 7).

The Brisbane Inner City branch managed to secure funds from the Brisbane City Council in order to undertake a research project in the local area. Both examples illustrate the role of the branch structure in developing and sharing local knowledge with Shelter.

The early 1990s was a period of rapid community sector growth in Queensland, underpinned by the development of formal legalisation (the Incorporation Act is one example) which supported the inclusion and burgeoning professionalisation of the sector. Shelter incorporated in 1993, enabling the organisation to apply for a wider range of government and philanthropic funding programs and receive tax benefits. In later chapters of this thesis I analyse the impact of various policies and programs (regarding inclusion of non-state actors) on the capacity of Shelter to participate in policy development, the point I make in this chapter is that these policies also impacted on the organisational culture of Shelter. Incorporation, for example, increased the bureaucratic demands made on the organisation. In order to incorporate Shelter was required to adopt a constitution, establish a management committee and provide financial reports. This impacted on the way in which Shelter conducted itself. Shelter no longer held informal committee meetings in each other's homes, or neighbourhood centres, by this time they were located in a shared office space with the Queensland Disability Housing Peak.

In 1997 Morgan-Thomas resigned from her position as the coordinator of Shelter. After a recruitment and selection process Roksana Khan became the second paid coordinator. Khan had a professional background in community development and had previously worked

with the Brisbane Migrant Centre. Prior to accepting the position Khan was aware of the advocacy work that Shelter had done on behalf of refugee housing. While Shelter membership remained steady³⁰ the organisation continued to expand its role in policy development. Khan recalls that sometime around the mid-1990s Shelter hired a business consultant to assist in the development of a three-year business plan (Khan 2013 interview by the author). This process was the impetus for three year funding agreements with the Beattie Labor Government rather than the one year cycle Shelter had worked with until then:

We also put it to the Department of Housing that we needed three year funding ... So we got the policy research position up, we got the two project positions, one was around the caravan park stuff and one was around getting the conference up ... And the big thing was we moved from our little tiny offices which used to flood ... (Khan 2013 interview by the author).

As described by Khan above, in addition to a longer funding cycle, the organisation received extra funding for staff (a policy and research worker) and projects and in 2006 moved to new premises at 167 Logan Rd Woolloongabba.

During this period a number of other housing related interests also operated within Queensland. Many of these focussed on a particular cohort– these included the Queensland Disability Housing Coalition, Queensland Public Tenants Association, the Tenants' Union of Queensland and The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition. At times, as the umbrella peak Shelter was required to balance the needs and wants of other housing interests. Former Shelter Coordinator Roksana Khan illustrates the role of board membership as one method of influencing the wider housing sector:

We did have to straddle carefully because everybody wanted Shelter to do something for them and all those everybody's something did not actually fit in the same cup. So there was a little bit of negotiation and management. The Board was the best thing because the Board always had everyone in it so they could not disown what came out of Shelter because their board members sat on our committee (Khan 2013 interview by the author).

When Khan left the organisation in 2002 to take a position with the Brisbane City Council, Adrian Pisarski was recruited by Shelter's board as the Executive Officer. The new position

³⁰ Shelter had 164 members at June 1994 and 187 members at June 1998.

title mirrored relabelling of the Shelter Management Committee to the Shelter Board. The change in language did not represent any change to the legal structure of Shelter; rather it illustrated a change in culture (Hopkins 2014 interview by the author).

Former director of QCOSS Jill Lang reflected on similar changes occurring across the sector

The whole corporate governance thing got ramped up, partly driven by government during the Howard era - the managerial focus rather than the mission focus - and we all started to do board training about board responsibilities and risk management. Board members became very nervous about it and we all started to introduce tighter governance procedures. QCOSS was in the grip of that to a certain extent too (Lang 2013 interview by author).

Fully funded policy advocacy Peak (2007-2012)

In 2007, Minister for Public Works and Housing Robert Swarten selected Shelter to become the sole government funded housing peak. From its origins of grassroots advocacy, Shelter had become the social housing peak, responsible for providing evidence based policy advice to the Queensland Government. By this stage nearly all incoming funds were received by the state government. The following tables are abridged versions of the ones prepared by William Small, Shelter Treasurer for the 2008/09 Shelter report. The first table details the increased income received in the financial year 2008/09, which was "... the first financial period to be wholly core funded by Department of Housing as the Policy Peak for 'Community and Social housing'"(Small 2009: 4).

Table 6: Increases in Shelter income (2008/09)

Funding Centres	Increase over FY [Financial Year] 2007-08	Per centum increase	Main contributors to accounts in 2007/08
Conference	\$122 614	100%	Q Shelter Conference
DoH [Department of Housing] Recurrent	\$157 260	18%	Department of Housing
Other income	\$169 676	75%	Bank interest, management fees, membership/donations
Projects	\$96 162	100%	New projects managed: Women escaping domestic violence, Indigenous housing, One Social Housing System, NAHA, homeless picnics, National Seniors, Seniors projects.

(Source: Small 2009: 4)

Table 7: Increases in Shelter expenses (2008/09)

Funding Centres	Increase over FY [Financial Year] 2007-08	Per centum increase	Main contributors in accounts with % difference to 2007/08
Accounting	\$3 439	52%	Audit Fees 43%
Communications	\$14 982	61%	Phone/fax 65%
Conference	\$88 929	100%	Shelter conference
Personnel	\$26 962	26%	Provisions – superannuation 37%, annual leave/load 39%, long service leave 16%, workers compensation 77%
Salaries	\$186 270	38%	Admin. 18% Communications 73%, Office Management 65 %, Policy 57%
Seniors	\$13 578	100%	Research and Advice module

(Source: Small 2009: 4)

In addition to extra funding Shelter was relocated into larger government owned premises in Spring Hill, see illustration 7.



Illustration 7: Shelter Offices 515 Wickham Terrace Spring Hill

(Source: Google street view)

Spring Hill, at the edge of the CBD, is one of the oldest suburbs in Brisbane, and is a mixture of extremes: poverty interspersed with wealth and prestige. These opposing ends of human experience are mixed throughout Spring Hill without any sense of order: Brisbane Boys Grammar, one of the most expensive schools in Brisbane, is located across the road from several (very run-down) emergency accommodation hostels. Stylish bars and coffee shops are located within close proximity to far less salubrious hotels and pubs. There are also several hospitals located in Spring Hill. At the southern end of the suburb is Roma Street Parkland, a 16 hectare site which had previously housed an orphanage and later a railway goods yard. In 1999 the Queensland Labor government led by Peter Beattie, integrated this land with the existing park on the site, Albert Garden, in order to create the Roma Street Parklands. The Parklands is a popular destination in its own right but the pathways through the garden are also used as a conduit between Roma Street Station and Spring Hill. The diversity of those accessing Spring Hill are apparent on these pathways, fancy school uniforms, shirtless and shoeless men, young and old, suits and exercise gear, patients and hospital visitors.

Shelter's elegant office space overlooks the Roma Street Parkland. The Queensland Government owns 515 Wickham Terrace, in the past a maternity hospital before being turned into nurses quarters. The building was derelict in the years just prior to Shelter's

tenancy, with the Department of Public Works specifically renovating the building so that Shelter could move in (Hopkins 2014 interview by the author). The free standing building neighbours Roma House, a support and accommodation service for those experiencing homelessness, which is run by Mission Australia with funding from the Queensland Government.

By 2011 Shelter had ten staff on the payroll. Along with the Executive Officer there were five staff working within the secretariat – including an operations manager, two administration officers, (one employed full-time and one part-time), a part-time finance position and another full-time role dedicated to communications and marketing. The Policy team included four staff members, consisting of a senior policy officer and three policy officers.

The excerpt from the 2011 service agreement below illustrates the role the Minister's office expected Shelter to play:

3.1 Description of Services

- (a) The purpose of the Funding provided to You under this Service Agreement is for You to act as a housing Service peak advisory body.
- (b) You are required to provide coordinated policy advice to the Minister for Community Services and housing and the Department of Communities, on behalf of parties with an interest in Housing Services and how they impact on low and moderate income households.
- (c) The Services detailed in item 3.1 (a) and (b) are to be provided state-wide.
- (d) Without limiting items 3.1 (a) and (b) above, as a peak advisory body, you are required to:-
 - (i) Develop strategies to address community prejudice towards people living in affordable housing and future developments;
 - (ii) Develop and promote an awareness campaign in Queensland and nationally to promote the benefits of affordable housing; and
 - (iii) Lobby councils regarding the development of affordable housing.

Illustration 8: Excerpt: service agreement between Department of Communities and Queensland Shelter

(Queensland Government 2011c: 4)

During my time working with Shelter I often wondered how the work that Shelter was funded for differed from that of work traditionally carried out by members of the public service. Reviewing the excerpt from the funding agreement above it is difficult to differentiate the purpose of Shelter from that of a government department. Not unlike a government department Shelter was funded to provide 'frank and fearless' advice. Interviews conducted for this project revealed that Shelter was, in some instances, in a better position to consult with the sector than the bureaucracy.

The culture of the organisation shifted after Shelter became the sole housing peak to receive government funding. No longer housed in cramped conditions, Shelter instead had fairly secure accommodation, which was well resourced with a security system, two fully functional kitchens, several meetings spaces and ample space for all staff. Arguably the resources enabled Shelter to provide better quality advocacy for the social housing sector but the offices of Shelter drew a sharp contrast to the experiences of some of the membership who had experienced housing stress themselves and/or worked with those that are experiencing housing stress. A question for this research is whether the government provided resources and funding impacted on grass roots representation. Following the move to Spring Hill policy 'evidence' continued to be developed through consultation with the sector but in addition Shelter was also financed to develop solutions based on research and ideas.

Reflecting on the changes to Shelter operation since 1987, Pisarski argues that Shelter had shifted from a demand-based social rights organisation to a solutions-based policy peak:

Most peak bodies and most organisations that have human rights principles embedded in them, which we still do, start off as serial complainers. Their job partly is to point out what's wrong, that's really why they've formed because they have noticed something wrong and they need to tell someone about it. I think that the mistake they make is assuming that nobody already knows because governments monitor this stuff all the time (Pisarski 2011 interview by the author).

Over the nine years that Pisarski worked with the organisation, he argues that the organisation became increasingly solutions focussed, working less on representing problems to government but rather concentrating on offering sophisticated policy solutions:

It [community sector] still sees itself as connected to the grassroots, and partly that means that it's whingey and complaining but it does try and connect itself back to the people that its working on behalf of. Now we might have even moved away from that notion a bit since I've been here because it is not really my forte. I mean I think we are still mindful of people but I just think the scale of the problem requires a solution of scale and that means ... a very sophisticated solution (Pisarski 2011 interview by the author).

In his interview Pisarski also discusses National Shelter's role in developing federal policy. The intersection between national and state levels of politics is discussed further in chapter

9 but it is important to note here that the shift in thinking from state to federal level impacted on the way in which Queensland Shelter operated and the view that was taken of key staff, namely the Executive Officer's role in influencing decision makers.

The makeup of the Board was also changing, due to the move, by state and federal government to outsource the management of social housing to non-government community housing companies. By 2012 there were several Shelter board members who were CEOs of large housing companies. Board members were not just there because of their knowledge of housing and their concern about housing stress, but because more and more of them were employed in community housing. My point here is not to assert that one board is 'better' than another but to acknowledge that the backgrounds and skills of board members is likely to impact on the work or direction that Shelter takes. Each board member brings a perspective to Shelter based on their own experiences, knowledge and background. In the early days of Shelter committee management (as the Board was known then), committee members were sourced from the burgeoning community housing program in Brisbane, many had backgrounds in social or community work.

Traditionally the role of the community board was viewed as one which set the policy direction of the organisation, while staff were responsible for implementing this policy and running the day-to-day operations. Fishel (2008) writes of the academic backlash to this "separation of powers" and posits that differences and shifts in the role and responsibilities of boards and staff are impacted by "the organisation's stage of evolution, by pressures and crisis, by the nature of the non-profit's work, and even by the chemistry of the key individuals concerned" (Fishel 2008: 12). Fishel proposes that boards swing between 'hands on' and 'hands off' and offers the following:

Table 8: Roles of board management

Hands On	Hands Off
CEO Transition	An established and trusted CEO
Competition, threats, alliances	Organisational stability
New directions	Program stability
Financial challenges	Healthy balance sheet and cash flow
Stakeholder concerns	Routinely positive feedback

(Reproduced from Fishel 2008: 13)

The information included in the table offers a good starting point in providing reasons why the board of the community organisation might be more or less involved at any given time.

Fishel also points out that during the establishment of a community group, the board is likely to be 'hands on', and "become more operationally involved than they would once the key staff team are in place and systems have been established" (Fishel 2008: 12). This is certainly the case with the early days of the Shelter committee. In addition to the work that had to be done in order to incorporate; some of the committee members had existing relationships with ministers and/or department staff and were instrumental in getting the voice of Shelter heard. In those early days the staff of Shelter did not have the connections to decision makers, rather the committee members, such as Deirdre Coghlan had established relationships with Members of Parliament.

As the organisation developed however, just as Fishel (2008) argues, the board oscillated between approaches, involved heavily during periods of organisation change, which were often proceeded by political change. Staff sought to develop relationships with decision makers, senior public servants and other members of the social housing sector. By the later stages of Shelter, as described in the above paragraphs, the Board were more hands off; the organisation was experiencing funding and program stability. In addition, Pisarski was a strong leader who established working relationships with key governmental players, at both the state and federal levels.

The community sector within Queensland was and remains a tight group – and this is particularly true of those involved in housing work within Brisbane. Former senior public servant, community worker and later locum coordinator of Shelter Penny Gillespie explains:

I guess in the Brisbane context, Brisbane is a small town really, I mean I know we are a city but we are a small town in the way we operate in some ways ... A lot of people in housing stay there for a long time you know they get kind of addicted to it ... and so a lot of people are around for a long time and so they know each other and they know of each other and they know of each other's reputations. They know who has got power and influence in that sector. So part of it will be that people have relationships that go beyond the workplace in the sense of ... some connection through social things as well because that's how people are and they have been around for a long time ... (Gillespie 2013 interview by the author).

Developing and maintaining relationships are important within the context of social housing advocacy work in Queensland. Many of those I interviewed had worked with the social

housing sector for decades – some held a variety of positions within federal, state and local government and/or roles within the not-for-profit sector.

This chapter has provided an overview of the changing nature of the role of the Board, staff and members throughout the twenty-five year evolution of Shelter. A range of federal and local government incentives, programs and legislation within this period have increasingly supported the inclusion of non-state voices in policy development. As discussed in the early chapters of this thesis, this inclusion varies, governments choose some organisations to work with more closely than others. Government retains the authority to manage non-state organisations through funding agreements and other legislation, such as the Incorporation Act. Formal regulation also ensures organisations are accountable for government (or other funds) received. The following chapters analyse the capacity of Shelter to participate in the development of public policy between 1987 and 2012.

Chapter Four:

Casting a shadow of disadvantage across the sunshine state³¹

The way a population is housed is vital to the quality of life. Housing is both a traded commodity and a physical fact. To understand the world that Shelter operated in, it is important to have a sense of the development of housing in Queensland and why the state has, from time to time, intervened in the housing market. Legislations governing key elements of housing, including relations between the rights of landlords and tenants is a state government matter. But the legislative background, the nature of the housing stock and its ownership has changed significantly over time. This chapter sets out that historical context.

Since 1788 government involvement in the provision of housing has waxed and waned, with religious and other community organisations stepping in to fill the gaps. In colonial times governments took full responsibility for the shelter of guards and prisoners for practical rather than benevolent reasons. Later within the early free settlement period the Queensland government oversaw purpose-built institutions to house people who either could not house themselves or were displaying characteristics that were deemed unsuitable for living with the general population. Following war and depression in the early 1900s the Queensland government lead the way in the development of public housing programs. Queensland was the first state within Australia to provide cheap loans to citizens for the purpose of building dwellings (Hayward 2008). The Australian federal government intervened in housing policy towards the end of World War II, establishing the first Commonwealth State Housing Agreement, which saw the merit of establishing Housing Commissions in each of the states. Initially public housing was built under the guise of 'the right of housing for all' – but states were unable to keep up with demand and have become reluctant landlords.³² The chapter discusses the provision of housing for vulnerable people within Queensland, providing

³¹ Chamberlain argued that partnerships between the government and non-government sectors might address the inequality which she referred to as the 'shadow' on the sunshine state (1985: 112).

³² Hayward, David. "The reluctant landlords? A history of public housing in Australia." (1996).

context for the subsequent case study chapters. With a relatively dispersed population and modest resources, Queensland did not develop the social infrastructure – from education to housing – to the same level as other states. Relations between the Federal and Queensland government have long held tensions, and these were exacerbated during the Bjelke-Petersen era (1968-1987).

Queensland: the ‘flogginest’ place in the Australia³³

The point at which Australian governments became involved in housing is contested. The Australian Bureau of Statistics argues not until after federation: “Before Federation in 1901, the provision of housing to low income groups was not generally seen as a government responsibility. Low income housing was largely provided by charities and church groups” (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1992: 7). Others take a broader view, arguing that between 1788 to the early 1800s the colonial government was entirely responsible for the welfare of white occupiers, including the provision of shelter. Historian Lacour-Gayet describes the accommodation of convicts and their guards:

... convicts were housed in ramshackle lean-tos, where they were probably no worse off than in His Majesty’s gaols and hulks back home. The soldiers lived in tents, of course, or in huts; the sailors lived on board the two warships. Only the king’s representative had the right to a house made of bricks” (1976: 89).

Convicts continued to be transported to Australia until 1868 with a usual sentence of seven years. Once they had reached Australia they were often given various types of pardons, while no longer required to serve the full sentence in confinement, they were not allowed to return to their country of origin before their original sentence date had been reached. Both convicts and released convicts formed ‘chain-gangs’ (Lacour-Gayet 1976: 92) and worked on clearing land for agricultural development. During these early years the gangs of workers built their own accommodation under the watchful eye of gang-masters. The labour was usually performed without the assistance of horses or other animals and was made more arduous by the climatic conditions, which were very different to those experienced in Britain:

Heavy labour, low rations and debilitating living conditions, where un-acclimatised men worked by day in a semi-nude state in all weathers and slept without bedding on

³³ Moreton Bay was once reputedly ‘the flogginest place in the whole colony’ (Molesworth Committee on Transportation 1938 Report cited Evans 2007: 50).

the bare boards of a poorly constructed convict barracks in overcrowded dormitories (Evans 2007: 43).

The dismal living conditions were secondary to the ever present fear of starvation. While the convict masters retained responsibility for shelter, there is very little resemblance between what has been briefly described here and the modern welfare state.

Two penal colonies were established in what is now known as Queensland. Norfolk Island was established in 1788 and less than five years later it housed 1000 convicts. Forced to close in 1814 due to management difficulties, it reopened in 1824 as a secondary penal colony. The objective of secondary penal colonies such as these was to deter further criminal activity. Secondary penal colonies acted:

... as the ultimate deterrent, short of death: forced labour camps of pristine discipline at the ever-widening margins of white occupation, administered militarily to enforce a regime of 'utmost dread' upon confines, as they prepared the way for free settlement to follow (Evans 2007: 27).

Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) is possibly the most well-known location of the secondary penal colonies but Moreton Bay was described as the most violent penal colony in Australia (Evans 2007: 50). The first stone buildings at Moreton Bay were built by convict work gangs, overseen by the 'overseers' who had been convicts themselves and were chosen for their brutality rather than any leadership skills (Evans 2007). The stone convict barracks were built between 1827 and 1830, eventually housing up to 1 000 people - many of whom lived and worked with the confines of the stone walls.

A third colony was proposed for the area which is now known as Gladstone (Hogan 1898). Writing in 1838, Sir Richard Bourke, Governor of New South Wales (1831-37), wrote: "If transportation to New South Wales be discontinued, some other vent must be found for criminals sentenced to that punishment, or some other punishment must be substituted" (Bourke cited by Hogan 1898: 14). But the attempt was thwarted, with the primary argument against the establishment being that the cost was too high (Hogan 1898: 67-69). In 1841 free settlers were officially allowed into the Moreton Bay settlement as the penal colonies began to shift towards free settlement.

Deviance and Institutional Care

There was no shortage of problems following the separation of Queensland in 1859. Severe drought, the spread of the introduced pest prickly pear, high levels of alcoholism and increasing levels of mental illness and crime. By 1861, 30 000 people of European origin were living in Queensland supported by 1358 hectares of farmed land (Cameron 1989: 4). Within the old area of Moreton Bay Penal Colony there was a concentration of social problems: unemployment, prostitution and violence. These problems continued to be dealt with by confinement and/or public lashings. The more serious offences could be dealt with using the death penalty.

The capacity of the new government of Queensland was poor due to a lack of resources, finance and knowledge (Evans 2007). Government welfare provision reflected the State's poor governing capacity:

... the colonial government took minimum responsibility for health, welfare or social services in nineteenth-century Queensland and the churches were slow to become involved. They relied upon the voluntary work of philanthropic organizations – usually founded, financed and run by middle-aged, middle-class women – to provide appropriate facilities, especially for ill or destitute women and children (McCulloch 2010: 53).

Several large institutions were built by the Queensland government in order to separate 'deviants' from the general population. Deviant behaviour was classified in one of two ways. Voluntary deviance, which was subsequently framed as criminal behaviour and required some form of punishment to ensure it did not reoccur or involuntary deviance, which was believed to be caused by some sort of 'sickness'. In the early separation period, however, these classifications did not have much impact on an individual's fate. Queenslanders suffering from a mental illness (labelled dangerously insane) and those who had committed a crime both usually ended up in H.M Brisbane Gaol (Evans 1969). This was in part due to pressure from authorities at Brisbane Hospitals, who did not wish to house 'dangerous lunatics' and who had pressured the colonial secretary to seek alternative arrangements for their accommodation. Imprisonment due to criminal behaviour had always been a part of Moreton Bay society, but increasingly throughout the 19th century other forms of behaviour considered unacceptable by the authorities led to separation from society.

From 1865, institutions were purpose built for patients with mental health problems, women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, those with a disability and the aged. In addition to the large long term facilities, reception houses were built by government and non-government organisations to provide interim accommodation for those in crisis. The purpose of a short stay in a reception house was to give a person the chance to regain his or her 'sense' enabling them to return to the community. It is now realised that some of those experiencing a form of mental illness were actually suffering from heat stroke. Swift recovery from this was often dependant on whether you were lucky enough to gain entry to a reception house or unfortunate enough to be confined in gaol where the physical, emotional and mental conditions were not congruent with recovery (Evans 1969).

The first institution built specifically for those with a mental illness was the Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum³⁴ which opened its doors in 1865 with 49 patients. It was the first mental asylum in Queensland and it would eventually become the largest and longest serving mental health facility in Australia (Finnane 2008). Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum was established with funds from the local government, and comprised of three buildings, one for men, one for women and "the superintendent's quarters in between" (Finnane 2008: 40). The ideological reasoning behind housing people in an asylum was both for the 'good' of the patient and the safety of the rest of the population (Finnane & Besley 2010). The Mental Health Act (1962) later established medical differences between mental illness and senility, which impacted on the policies of care provided for these people - people with senility were re-housed in aged care homes (Finnane 2008: 41).

Churches also established missions, providing accommodation and indoctrination. Between 1837 and 1940 there were 44 missions established in Queensland by sixteen different organisations to confine and house Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The first mission was established in 1886 by the Lutheran Church at Cape Bedford and Bloomfield River (Long 1970: 93). One motivation of these organisations was to indoctrinate the people that were living there into their own religious beliefs. These institutions were embedded within the government policies of the time which were focussed on assimilation.³⁵ In 1914 the government established three large missions for those Aboriginal and Torres Strait

³⁴ Renamed many times, Goodna Asylum for the Insane (1880), Goodna Mental Hospital (1930s), Brisbane Mental Hospital (1959), Brisbane Special Hospital (1962), Wolston Park Hospital (1969) and The Park Centre for Mental Health Treatment (2000) (Finnane 2008).

³⁵ The struggles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the Stolen Generation 1997 *The Way We Civilize* Rosalind Kidd, Lane 1997.

Islander people, who had been labelled “the most difficult and severely disadvantaged” (Lane 1997: 24). By 1960, over 9000 Aboriginal people were confined in missions while, “Others lived in smaller, police supervised rural ‘reserves’ on the outskirts of white townships” (Evans 2007: 211-12). Many of these people were housed against their will.

Philanthropic organisations also developed within Queensland to provide care and rehabilitation. The Brisbane Industrial Home opened in 1883 in Gregory Terrace, a philanthropic home for ‘fallen’ women. The home provided accommodation and training for newly arrived single migrants, reforming prostitutes, prisoners and unwed mothers. The Home received annual support of 300 pounds from the colonial government (*Brisbane Courier* 1885 cited McCulloch 2010: 51), and some funding from private donors. The majority of the funds were raised through the labour of the women who worked there. Brisbane Industrial Home was overseen by a committee of over 30 philanthropic women and managed by a matron who met with the management committee weekly. The women housed in the Home were trained in domestic duties, in preparation for joining the workforce as servants and also as a “source of revenue because, like most of the other charities, the Industrial Homes was responsible for raising most of its own funds from subscriptions and donations.” The Queensland Club, for example had its laundry done at the home (McCulloch 2010: 51-52).

Following the establishment of the Brisbane Industrial Home, a number of other charities were established including: Young Men’s Christian Association (est. 1885), Social Purity Society, Lady Musgrave Lodge Committee, Young Women’s Christian Association in 1887 (McCulloch 2010: 52). The Lady Musgrave Lodge³⁶ continues to operate today, with two separate properties containing a dozen self-contained units to accommodate young women who are unable to afford accommodation (Lady Musgrove Lodge N.D). McCulloch notes that “Although there was normally a strong Christian/redemption aspect present in most of the charities catering for ‘fallen’ women, this should not detract from the excellent service they provided” (2010: 53).

This idea of redemption combined with the idea of ‘fixing’ the behaviour of the individual so that they assimilated with the rest of society underpinned much of the first half of the 19th century welfare state in Australia. Prior to this Australia had operated as a penal colony and

³⁶ Formally known as Girls Training and Protection Society (McCulloch 2010:53) and now known as Lady Musgrave Trust (Website)

the welfare of citizens were not considered, "We cared less about the convicts ... who lived in makeshift and temporary accommodation as they laboured to build the accommodation of their superiors and ultimately to build their own – a gaol" (Troy 2012: 1). The idea of separation has been present since the arrival of the first fleet. Former Queensland Attorney-General and Queensland Minister for Justice during the Goss and Beattie government, Matt Foley describes this separation as an "estrangement which runs through the core of the Australian identity" (Queensland Speaks Website. Matt Foley 2012. 19.16).

The discovery of gold in 1867 led to a population and economic boom within Queensland. Large numbers of people migrated to Queensland in pursuit of riches. Many lived in tent cities close to the mine sites until they were able to secure more permanent dwellings. The first 45 years of the new century were a mixture of war and tough economic times (Evans 2007). As the gold rush came to an end, people returned to the city areas looking for employment only to encounter the 1890s depression. Public transport was woefully inadequate so people needed to live within close distance to where they worked, or hoped to work. This population shift led to a critical housing shortage and the growth of slums in all of the major cities of which Brisbane was no exception (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1992: 4-5). During this depression people deserted their homes, forced to live with others or sleep rough, due to high levels of poverty brought on by increasing unemployment (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1992: 7). Housing pressure was mounting, in the 1933 census 33 000 Australians were living in tent cities (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1992: 10).

Queensland was the first state to enact legislation to provide housing loans for citizens with the adoption of the Workers' Dwellings Act (1909). The Queensland Workers Dwelling Branch administrated low cost loans and building advice. These loans enabled Queenslanders to build timber and tin homes at a low cost. In the early part of the century, workers dwellings were one or two room shelters with cooking performed outside over open fires (National Trust of Australia 2006). The Kidston Coalition government introduced the Workers' Dwelling Bill in 1908 making Queensland the first state in Australia to introduce such a 'welfare' bill (Rechner 1994: 265)³⁷. The Bill enabled any person who earned less than £200 per annum, but who owned land,³⁸ was a British subject over the age of 21 and who did not already own a dwelling to borrow money from the Queensland government in

³⁷ See Rechner, Judy. "The Queensland workers' dwelling 1910-1940." *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland* 15, no. 6 (1994): 265-278.

³⁸ The land had to be free-hold, and not subject to any mining leases (Rechner 1994: 266).

order to build a dwelling. The purpose of this policy was to ensure that people of limited means were able to afford to build a home for themselves and their families (Rechner 1994). The Workers Dwelling scheme enabled the building of 23 000 dwellings between 1910 and 1940. The average number built each year fluctuated due to war, scarcity of building materials and political will.

The Great Depression, which engulfed Australia shortly after the Wall Street crash, led many people to return to Brisbane in the hope of gaining employment. Some families opened spare rooms to members of the public, providing board and lodgings for the transient population who had managed to secure work in major cities and trading centres. Shirley Ball's book, *Muma's Boarding House* (1978), is an account of her experiences of living in her parent's boarding house in Spring Hill Brisbane during much of her childhood. Ball writes of the tenants:

To the hard core of permanents in the house, usually twelve to sixteen of them, were added another dozen semi-permanents and casuals – the off-season shearers and canecutters. They were the affluent of those hard times, having enough money in their pockets to last through until the next job (Ball 1978: 8).

Hard economic times were followed by Australia's involvement in World War II. All building work came to a 'virtual standstill' with the start of World War II in 1939. In April 1944 Prime Minister Curtin established the Commonwealth Housing Commission (CHC) (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1992: 11). Prior to this each Australian state had sole responsibility for housing policy but federal frustration at the speed at which the states were clearing slums in major cities, combined with the emerging chronic shortage in housing following the end of the war encouraged the Commonwealth to first establish a federal housing commission and shortly later establish a funding agreement with each of the states.

Following the end of the war, population growth, caused by an influx of immigrants, Australian Troops and support workers contributed to housing shortages (Saunders 1999). These issues were compounded by a worldwide shortage in building supplies and skilled construction workforce (Saunders 1999, Simpson 2005). Many Queenslanders were living in rough conditions. Former Assistant Commissioner of Housing (1971-74), William Simpson who was working for the commission of housing at time, recalls the tensions and pressures: "thousands of families were virtually homeless or living in substandard or overcrowded conditions. Many were taking shelter in the discarded army camps" (Simpson 2005: 17). In

Brisbane some families were forced to make shelter with any material they could get their hands on: "Census statistics show that 4,218 families were known to be housed in dwellings of calico, canvas or hessian, while 70 families resided in bark structures" (Saunders 1999: 13).

From 1946 to 1960 tens of thousands of Queenslanders were housed in temporary accommodation as they waited for public housing. There were fourteen of these housing sites (known as temporaries) established in Queensland. Some of these temporary camps, such as those established in old army barracks, emerged as people without homes discovered the unoccupied space. At first people squatting in these camps were not required to pay rent but the Queensland Housing Commission stepped in to regulate and provide some protection for families living in the camps:

... the State Government stepped in and directed the Housing Commission to take over all of the camps, check and record all of the occupants and examine each building thoroughly to ensure that there were no leaky roofs or broken windows, that both the plumbing and drainage were in good working order and that the electricity was functioning correctly and was safe and free from any dangerous hazards (Simpson 2005: 46).

Revenue for repairs was raised by charging those living there a 'nominal fee' for the service the Commission was providing (Simpson 2005: 47).

In 1945 the first Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (1945) was signed between each state and the commonwealth. Labor Premier Frank Cooper was the first Queensland Premier to sign on behalf of Queensland. This agreement led to the establishment of the Queensland Housing Commission, which in addition to taking on the loan and advice roles of the Workers Dwelling Branch, also set about building housing to be rented to citizens who were unable to afford to buy or rent privately.

For a short period Queensland led the way for other Australian states in the development of public housing. Queensland was the first state to import pre-fabricated houses and other building supplies, including cement from Czechoslovakia, iron sheets from Belgium and tin from England, Finland and Sweden (Queensland Government 2004: 15). By the start of the 1960s, the Queensland Housing Commission had constructed nearly 23,000 houses, half of which were sold and the other half were kept by the Commission and rented as public housing (Queensland Government 2004: 16). During this early post-war era, public housing

did not carry the stigma that it would later. The Queensland Housing Commission actively encouraged Queenslanders to take part and secure accommodation.

The demographic of people accessing public housing has changed dramatically over the last three decades. The demographic of households requiring public housing was changing with increases in sole parent families, the number of people living alone and the aging population. The Housing Commission started building large unit blocks as opposed to detached dwellings and the problems associated with these contributed to the stigma that attached to public housing. The idea of public housing as a human right has long competed with the entrenched Australian aspiration of the importance of owning your own home. Governments developed the welfare state in response to the large need following the end of World War II but they have been unable or unwilling to continue to offer public housing at the same rate.

At its core, the Queensland Housing Commission remained a building and landlord agency, unable to cope with the changing demands. The Commission was established to build housing and manage tenancies. The culture of the organisation was aligned to property management – collecting rent and managing repairs rather than addressing the social issues underpinning housing stress. As such Shelter had very little traction with the Queensland Housing Commission, as Deirdre Coghlan explains:

We'd tried to crack the Queensland Housing Commission. We got a meeting, Helen and Ross went off for this meeting ... and they wanted to talk about the people in housing and that. And he said ... 'you've got it all wrong', he said 'the Queensland Housing Commission is not about people, it is about bricks and mortar.' So that was the culture at the top and that went right through (Coghlan 2011 interview by the author).

Another founding Shelter member, Jon Eastgate described the difficulty in gaining access to decision makers within the Queensland Housing Commission.

There was a few people ... who organised tenants to speak up on their own behalf and the Housing Commission was quite hostile to that. At one stage they organised a tenant gathering in King George Square, you know the Housing Commission was just up the road and they invited the Housing Commissioner to come and speak to it - so they weren't wanting to be confrontational. And he [Housing Commissioner] sent

them a two line letter 'I receive many such invitations. All are refused'... (Eastgate 2013 interview by the author)

Dick Persson who moved from New South Wales to take on the position of Director-General of Housing (1989-1994) recalled the culture of the Housing Commission. He described the treatment of those seeking social services in comparison to those seeking a home loan. Persson explained the inappropriate process, used by the Housing Commission, to assist people escaping a domestic and family violence situation:

If you went as a battered person, more likely a battered women, who was escaping domestic violence - and you wanted to seek housing assistance. You went to a counter in this Adelaide St office, which was like an old fashioned open counter, where there might be three or four people who had a work station ... You'd take a number and you would be called up and you had to tell your story with no privacy, with someone standing less than a metre next to you telling their story (Persson 2013 interview by the author).

Persson then explained how those applying for a housing loan (in order to purchase their own home) were afforded privacy and respect:

If you applied for a home loan ... you actually made an appointment to come in and then you were taken into an office and interviewed with the door closed because well 'they discussed private information there about your finances' (Persson 2013 interview by the author).

While some have argued that the Australian welfare state did not emerge until after World War II, it is clear that from the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788, successive governments have had little option but to take action over the provision and quality of housing. Initially this was in the form of controlling convict labour, a labour force that cleared land for farming, built the first stone buildings and was also forced to build the less than hospitable convict barracks. Free settlement led to a retreat by the state in most accommodation matters, except for the continued expansion of gaols. In the mid-1800s the Queensland Government began to build institutions to house and provide treatment for the mentally ill, the poor and the elderly. Queensland's experience echoed that of the other colonies. Philanthropic organisations (with some funds contributed by government) were also established for 'fallen' women who had either become pregnant out of wedlock, worked as prostitutes or simply moved to Queensland and found no means of supporting themselves. Various churches

(and to a lesser extent) the government developed missions, under the guise of assimilation policies for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and children.

The state intervened at a number of points during the 20th century. The Queensland Workers Dwelling Branch was established in 1909 to provide low interest loans for people in order to buy their own homes. In the 1920s the federal government War Services Housing Commission acquired parcels of land in the capital cities to build houses for servicemen. One of the largest estates in Clifton Hill, near Moorooka in the western suburbs of Brisbane, offered 128 houses on substantial blocks of land. Just prior to the end of World War II the Commonwealth government established the Commonwealth Housing Commission in preparation for the housing shortage crisis. This led to the signing of the first Commonwealth State Housing Agreement, an agreement which enabled the Queensland government to begin building public housing following the end of the war. This was a time when large numbers of families were forced to live in temporary camps while they waited for housing to become available. The state's largest landlord, the Queensland Housing Commission came under enormous pressure to deliver adequate housing for the state's less well-off citizens. Although public housing shifted in the 1960s as housing for the 'deserving' poor, the Housing Commission continued to act as a landlord rather than welfare agency.

Chapter Five:

A brick wall: Shelter on the outside (1987-89)

In following chapters I use the revised insider interest group typology to examine the relationship between Shelter and the conservative party who held power in Queensland for thirty-two consecutive years until the election of the Goss Labor government in 1989.³⁹ For 19 years of this period, the state was led by Joh Bjelke-Petersen. The political era was characterised by a focus on economic development, law and order and centralised decision making. In the fall-out following the Fitzgerald Inquiry the governing party lost confidence in Bjelke-Petersen as leader and following a leadership spill Mike Ahern became the new premier. While Ahern (and his successor Russell Cooper) had a more conciliatory approach to governing, Shelter remained an outsider group. In the late 1980s Shelter supported the Tenants' Union of Queensland's campaign for the establishment of a Rental Bond Authority (RBA) in Queensland. The doors of the Rental Bond Authority opened in 1989. More notable, however, than the establishment of RBA is the inclusion of a member of Shelter on the Board of the Authority, which was a result of pressure for tenant representation. This is an example of outsider group success. The first section of this chapter provides context for understanding the political environment in Queensland in light of subsequent discussion regarding Shelter's role in promoting a rental authority in Queensland.

Minister of Works and Housing

Johannes Bjelke-Petersen was elected to the Queensland Parliament as a member of the Australian Country Party⁴⁰ in 1947. He served as a backbencher for sixteen years before becoming the Minister for Works and Housing in 1963. As Minister for Housing Bjelke-Petersen was responsible for the Queensland Housing Commission and public works

³⁹ Joh Bjelke-Petersen was the Queensland Premier from 08/08/1968–01/12/1987, replaced by Mike Ahern who remained leader until 25/09/1989, after which Russell Cooper became Premier for a very short period, before the Goss Labor party took office on the 7/12/1989.

⁴⁰ The Country Party of Queensland became the National Party of Australia in 1974.

portfolio. Whitton argues that as Minister for Works and Housing, Bjelke-Petersen was “A frequent proponent of the virtue of law and order, he was a diligent and assiduous, if colourless, Minister in a portfolio that offered opportunities to store up political debts by way of government buildings in colleagues’ electorates” (Whitton 1989: 13). Wear (2002) concurs, “The great advantage of a portfolio like Works and Housing for an ambitious man was the opportunity for doing favours” (2008: 79). Bjelke-Petersen was responsible for the “design, construction and furnishing of all government buildings and the maintenance of the government’s capital assets” as well as “all Housing Commission construction in the state ...” (Wear 2002: 79).

In August of 1968 following the sudden death of Premier Jack Pizzey, Bjelke-Petersen became Premier of Queensland and Alan Hodges became the new housing minister. Law and order dominated the political agenda (Richards 1972). In the preface to his book, *The Hillbilly Dictator*, Evan Whitton (1989) describes the Bjelke-Petersen era as “a closely documented case study of the ease with which a parliamentary democracy can become an authoritarian state, tolerant of corruption and injustice, and destructive of the rule of law” (1989: Preface). A political opponent, quoted by Walter and Dickie (1985), described Bjelke-Petersen as someone who “... makes up the rules ... within cabinet, within his party, within the parliament, within the state” (Walter and Dickie 1985: 37).

Yet Bjelke-Petersen remains Queensland’s longest serving premier, holding onto the position for nineteen years. While some argue that his electoral longevity relied on gerrymandering, others argue that Joh Bjelke-Petersen achieved a great deal in Queensland and indeed his hard-line on law and order was appealing to some, “Among many voters such rhetoric had (and has) wide appeal” (Fitzgerald 1984: 574). Premier Bjelke-Petersen did accept some policy advice but this advice was not necessarily from members of his political party, the elected parliamentarians or even his Cabinet.

This lack of consultation in combination with a premier who was increasingly unreceptive to both his parliament and his own political party led to ineffectiveness within the existing political institutions. Input from both government and the non-government sector was severely restricted. Former Deputy Premier Llew Edwards contends that Bjelke-Petersen’s pilot Beryl Young and Alan Callaghan were among a handful of individuals who exercised influence on the Premier:

He [Bjelke-Petersen] depended more on Callaghan and Beryl's advice and opinions in that plane than he did on his public service who would have given him independent advice rather than advice with some political taste (Edwards 2009, *Queensland Speaks*, 00:31:17 – 00:31:33) .

The political processes were limited during this period, as described by former ALP politician and historian Dr Denis Murphy:

The Queensland parliament does not give the impression of being the vibrant forum of democracy. Standing orders seem to be designed to prevent rather than encourage debate; questions without notice are not allowed; ministerial statements are not debated and there is no private members' debate at the daily adjournment (Murphy 1970: 92)).

The ineffectiveness of parliament was associated with both the political structures and the agency of the members: a one tier parliamentary system and "... widespread ignorance of parliamentary convention and the expectation within parliament and the community of strong political leadership" (Wear 2002: 130). Backbenchers were described by one commentator as:

... de facto social workers, visiting flower shows, being patrons of local organisations, writing letters and asking questions in parliament. Many backbenchers feel completely frustrated at their powerlessness and their inability to become legislators (Murphy 1970: 92).

Cabinet decision making was "hit and miss," issues were taken to Cabinet but the process was "informal" (Wear: 2002: 130-52). While this informality enabled quick decision making, the benefits of speed were diminished by the impact on accountability and democracy. Reflecting on the era, former Labor politician and Queensland Treasurer Keith De Lacy wrote:

I understand that the previous Government would often consider 60-80 Cabinet submissions at each two or three hour Cabinet meeting each week. It does not need an arithmetician to realise that this leaves only a few minutes to discuss each item (De Lacy 1992: 123).

While citizens in other states were free to involve themselves in marches and demonstrations, Queensland legislation could prevent the organisation of protest marches

without a permit under a clause in the Traffic Act 1949 (Brennan 1983). At first the laws preventing protest marching were applied with some discretion by police. On one occasion citizens handing out leaflets during a postal strike were charged while on another people carrying signs and chanting in protest to the Vietnam war were “described by police spokesmen as having constituted not a march, but simply a number of pedestrians who happened to be going in the same direction at the same time” (Barclay 1968: 430). But this ‘light touch’ on organised marching was not to last, increasingly laws preventing marching were applied to the full extent.

In 1976, during a student demonstration, a female student was struck by police, the filming of which was broadcast by media across Australia. While there were calls for an inquiry, supported by the Police Minister Rod Whitrod, these were squashed by Premier Bjelke-Petersen (Fitzgerald 1984: 570). Throughout the 1960s Queenslanders had a right of appeal for any refused permit, but Bjelke-Petersen had this legislation amended in 1977, abolishing the right of appeal (Fitzgerald 1984: 559). On the 5 September 1977 Bjelke-Petersen declared:

The day of the political street March is over. Anyone who hold a street march spontaneously or otherwise will know they’re acting illegally ... Don’t bother applying for a permit. You won’t get one. That’s government policy now (*The Courier-Mail* cited by Fitzgerald 1984: 572).

The ban on street marching lasted for several years and led to 2000 arrests. By 1979 the government was under pressure from national and other state politicians to remove the ban, due to its ‘anti-democratic nature’ (Fitzgerald 1984: 578).

The relationship between the progressive Federal Whitlam government (1972 - 1975) and the conservative Bjelke-Petersen government became increasingly fraught. Whitlam was quoted as referring to Bjelke-Petersen as a “... bible-bashing bastard ... the man is a paranoiac, a bigot, and fanatical” (Whitton 1989: 25). The Queensland Cabinet were highly critical of the Whitlam Labor government (Richards 1974: 3) and paranoid about many aspects of social change. In the mid-1970s Cabinet retained an Oxford University law professor to provide legal advice regarding commonwealth powers (Richards 1975). One area of concern for the State government was the Family Law Bill which paved the way for no fault divorce. The state saw this federal law, like many others, as diminishing Queensland’s autonomy (Richards 1975). Cabinet minutes expose a conscious decision

made by Cabinet to provide 'limited' social data to 'the commonwealth as it might be used to criticise Queensland's welfare policies" (Richards 1974).⁴¹

Queensland had developed an inauspicious reputation with citizens in other parts of the country and the sustained electoral support of Bjelke-Petersen did little to change this impression of Queensland. As academic Rae Wear eloquently writes:

... the state was frequently portrayed as rural, backward, racist, populist, authoritarian and corrupt. It was often referred to as the Deep North and considered to be 'different' from the rest of Australia, mainly because Queenslanders kept electing governments led by Bjelke-Petersen. To those of a liberal, democratic disposition, life in Queensland had the characteristics that the Premier himself once attributed to running along a barbed wire fence with a foot on either side: 'it doesn't work and it's not very comfortable'. Bjelke-Petersen, however, celebrated Queensland difference and treated outsiders with contempt (Wear 2010).

State housing policy in Queensland did little to alter this perception. Dick Persson recalls while working as a federal public servant on the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (1989) that:

Basically we used to talk about the Queensland clauses ... to a great extent this agreement was focused on how to overcome the dreadful housing policies and environment that were operating in the state of Queensland which was very much at odds with other states (Persson 2013 interview by the author)

Queensland academic and former public servant, Linda Colley argues that the Queensland Public Service was constrained during this period; "They [the conservative government] weakened the career service conventions to the lowest point in Queensland's history" (Colley 2009: 169). The Public Service Commissioner was replaced by the Public Service Board who were directed to "prevent growth of departmental staff numbers", limit growth in wages or conditions and ensure that the government had "greater control and less transparency in the employment of senior officers" (Colley 2009: 69-70).

⁴¹ (Decision 20195 (Submission 118010) 4 March 1974 and Decision 20498 (Submission 18282 7 May 1974 cited in Richards 1974).

In contrast Paul Reynolds argues that a lack of interest by the Premier in the public service enabled the public service to develop some autonomy:

So what happened was that it was a mixture of authoritarian rule, but the authoritarianism wasn't consistent ... Mostly it was they [the Ministers] trusted the public service who had been there for their duration of their time in office, thirty-two years (Reynolds 2011, *Queensland Speaks*, 00:21:07-00:21:29).

The impact of community pressure groups strategies during the Bjelke-Petersen era was low, as Chamberlain writes:

With few exceptions, community groups in Queensland have been reticent in promoting their ideas and lobbying the government, let alone mounting a sustain critique. The non-government sector is poorly organised (Chamberlain 1985: 112).

An exception to this was a successful campaign on the school curriculum, led by Rona Joyner. As founder of pressure groups, STOP and CARE (Scott 1980: 125) Joyner used both insider and outsider strategies and was instrumental to the decision to ban both 'Man a Course of Study' (MACOS) and Social Education Materials Project (SEMP) courses in Queensland Schools. Joyner was viewed as an outsider to the Department of Education staff but managed to influence members of parliament. Professor Ann Scott writes that while Joyner:

... found her way barred when she tried to work through bureaucratic channels because of lack of sympathy for her views among public servants and her impact became important and ultimately crucial when she started more direct lobbying of political leaders (Scott 1980: 145)

This strategy of direct lobbying was used in conjunction with gaining attention "in the public arena through her saturation of the letter columns of local papers and by exploiting public access to radio when 'talk-back' first started in Brisbane" (Scott 1980: 145). Scott argues that it is important to look at the combination of strategies used by Joyner, and that too much emphasis has been placed on her positive relationship with Flo Bjelke-Petersen (the Premier's wife). This relationship would certainly have helped, Scott argues, but through the support of the membership of both pressure groups, Joyner was able to present her views on educational material as being supported by a network of people throughout the state of Queensland. Therefore Scott concludes that both her personal relationships with Flo and

the support of the membership base were instrumental in her lobbying power (Scott 1980: 145).

Joyner was a fundamental Christian with deeply conservative views. Both of which were likely to have helped her to achieve traction with members of the Bjelke-Petersen Government. During this period members of Shelter were aware that the ideology of the organisation and that of the government were vastly different: "It was the Bjelke-Petersen Government - there wasn't a lot of support or sympathy for action on housing. It was a very conservative environment." (Eastgate 2013 interview by the author). Long-time housing advocate and founding member of Shelter, Deirdre Coghlan recalled how the awareness of political ideology impacted on the framing of policy issues and solutions by Shelter members:

When we talked to people on the left or people in Labor, we talked about social justice issues, human dignity, what have you. I learnt that lesson then and it's never left me. But when we talked to conservative governments, we talked about the same thing but we talked about people pulling themselves up by the boot straps, skilling for the future of the country ... So we said the same things but we learnt very early to couch it in a way that went in. So it went beyond their politics it went into their philosophy (Coghlan 2011 author interview).

Cracks on the conservative side of politics began appearing when a leadership spill led to Mike Ahern becoming Premier following the Fitzgerald Inquiry into corruption (1987-89). Political instability and increased pressure by citizen action groups contributed to wider demands for change. The United Nations declaration of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in 1987 and the increasing housing stress in Brisbane due to Expo '88 were two factors which caused housing to gain media attention and some prominence on the political agenda. Shelter remained an outsider group, but the political instability and the increasing pressure by citizen action groups contributed to political support for change. It was during this period that Shelter supported the Tenants' Union of Queensland in advocating for a rental bond authority.

Outsider Success: Rental Bond Authority

The Rental Bond Authority (RBA)⁴² (now known as the Residential Tenancies Authority) opened on the 1st December 1989 – the day before the 1989 Queensland state election, which was won by the Labor Party led by Wayne Goss. The Authority was established through The Rental Bond Act. The reform required that agents and landlords lodge rental bonds with the Authority (Rental Bond Authority 1990). Prior to the Act, bond payments were held by individual agents and landlords. One of the functions of the Rental Bond Authority was to reinvest bonds and use the interest earned on these bonds to improve conditions for tenants (Thew 1989). In addition tenants would no longer be at the mercy of landlords in terms of receiving their bond back at the end of their tenancy. It has been suggested that prior to the establishment of the Rental Bond Authority, around 60 per cent of the work undertaken by the Small Claims Tribunal was attributed to tenant and landlord disputes (Petersen 1989).

Shelter supported the Tenants' Union of Queensland in pressuring the National Party government led by Mike Ahern, for a rental bond agency. Shelter argued that a bond board would create a more equitable situation for tenants, who would no longer have to rely on the 'good will' of landlords. In addition the interest generated on the money held in bond would be used to provide tenancy support. While this campaign may have contributed to the establishment of the RBA, New South Wales and South Australia had already set up independent bond boards and the prior establishment of these boards was also being used to support the Queensland reform (*The Courier-Mail* 1989a). Attorney-General Paul Clauson was a key proponent of the Bill, which had the support of the Opposition Labor Party. The biggest opposition came from the Real Estate Institute of Queensland (*The Courier-Mail* 1989a). Prior to the Rental Bond Authority, any interest collected on the bond money had been kept by the agent. The Liberal Party of Queensland also mounted some fairly weak opposition, claiming that the Bond Board would increase the costs associated with renting for property managers and that these costs would be passed onto tenants (*The Courier-Mail* 1989b).

Despite some reservations the Bill passed through the parliament on the 14th March 1989, with 67 votes for, (from the National Party and the ALP), and eight votes against –all Liberal Party members (Rental Bond Authority 1990). The implementation of the Rental Bond

⁴² Confusingly at times the RBA was also colloquially referred to as the Rental Bond Board.

Authority proceeded. The Tenants' Union of Queensland, supported by Shelter campaigned for this change but the timing was also favourable. As Coghlan explained:

We pressured for the rental bond authority to come around ... That was a time when that government listened because ... the Fitzgerald Report had come down and so they needed to be seen to be doing some things ... Mike Ahern was a pretty good, he was a good man and he tried to bring in some good things ... and so we jumped on the wagon (Coghlan 2011 author interview).

The campaign by the Tenants' Union of Queensland and Shelter was also likely aided by an article published in November of 1989 by journalist Don Petersen, where he emphasised the additional level of protection the Authority would give to landlords. This was in contrast to previous media stories which had concentrated on benefits to tenants. The article featured examples of tenants destroying property. One story told was that of the tenant who was a model train enthusiast, who cut holes in each wall of the apartment he was leasing in order to create a "maze" of train tracks running throughout. Another example was of an irate karate champion who upon discovering his wife had cheated on him damaged walls, doors and the kitchen before turning his attention to the outside fence (Petersen 1989). The consideration given to these tenancies in this media report, demonstrates a shift in the type of attention that the issue was receiving. Unlike earlier media reports, the Rental Bond Authority was now being described as beneficial to both landlords and tenants, not just to tenants. While the Tenants' Union of Queensland and Shelter had a wholly tenant focus, the issue was successfully reframed courtesy of Mr Ted Howard, whom journalist Don Petersen had interviewed in preparing his article. Mr Howard was both the Chair of the Property Owners Association and the Rental Bond Authority (RBA) when *The Courier-Mail* ran the story on the rationale for the Authority, one month prior to its opening.

Successful pressure by the Tenants' Union of Queensland and Shelter was demonstrated in the selection of the Authority's board membership. In a *Courier-Mail* article Mr See (Chairperson of the Tenants' Union of Queensland) was quoted as accusing the Attorney-General Paul Clauson of appointing board members who were "critics" of the proposal to "shut them up" (Thew 1989). Shortly afterwards Family Services Minister, Craig Sherrin, announced that a member of the Catholic Housing Working Party, Deirdre Coghlan would "bring to two the number of tenants' spokesmen on the authority eight-member Authority" (*The Courier-Mail* 1989c). Deirdre Coghlan was also a founding member of Shelter and her position on the board demonstrates that the campaign to ensure the board represented

tenants as well as business and government was successful. Coghlan was put forward by a Bishop involved with the Brisbane based Catholic Housing Working Party (Coghlan 2011 interview by the author). Coghlan had, however very little influence on the Board of the Rental Bond Authority: "Mind you I never won a vote because they were all very conservative ... developers, real estate, conservative lawyers and me" (Coghlan 2011 interview by the author). This was however an important step in the development of Shelter as an organisation and illustrates the organisation limited role as an outsider group during this era.

There was very little opportunity for any social policy advocacy group to operate as an insider during the Bjelke-Petersen political era. The highly centralised government maintained a closed door, with few exceptions. When Mike Ahern took over as Premier, however, Shelter worked with the Tenants' Union of Queensland to pressure the government for a Rental Bond Authority. Members of Shelter also successfully campaigned for the inclusion of a representative for public housing tenants on the board of the Rental Bond Authority.

Chapter Six:

An open door: Shelter and the Goss Government (1989-96)

While Joh Bjelke-Petersen had boasted about his lack of citizen consultation: “You don’t tell the frogs anything before you drain the swamp”⁴³ the Goss government were explicitly consultative open to policy advice, from some non-government sources, especially if it appeared to come from a basis of expertise with genuine community support (Caulfield & Davies: 1995). Such was the level of emphasis on inclusive policy development that Patrick Weller (1993) labelled citizens at the start of the 1990s ‘participation happy’ (cited in Caulfield & Davies 1995: 227). Nonetheless many of the formal and informal processes of participation and consultation present in policy development during the late 1990s and 2000s were yet to be developed. Political will of the Goss government supported consultation but participation was restricted due to insufficient institutional support. Shelter was an insider group during this era, providing advice on housing issues.

After a long period in Opposition the newly elected Goss Labor government welcomed policy advice as it began reforming the social housing portfolio. Not least because the newly elected government had no ministerial experience: “The ALP had been out of office for 32 years. No shadow minister had ever presided over a department” (Coaldrake, Davis & Shand 1992: 7). When Premier Goss announced that the first Cabinet meeting would be held the following Monday after the election some of the newly appointed ministers were not sure of the location of the Cabinet room (Scott et al 2001: 249). Experience, or lack thereof aside, the Goss government had a mandate for major reform and an ideological commitment to community consultation (Caulfield & Wanna 1995). The commitment to consultation reflected broader political rhetoric but was also underpinned by the need for policy advice:

Community political activism in Queensland needs to be seen, first, as part of a wider phenomenon which has occurred elsewhere in Australia, indeed in most industrially

⁴³ Helen Cameron (comp), *Feeding the chooks: a selection of well-known sayings of former Queensland Premier* ND cited in Queensland Historical Atlas <http://www.qhatlas.com.au/>.

advanced democracies; second, it needs to be understood as a response to new opportunities for policy involvement afforded by political changes in government administrations at state and local levels (Caulfield & Davies 1995: 227).

The state was ready for change but the capacity for change in both the public service and the not-for-profit sector was poor due to systemic underutilisation by the former government. The Goss government sought to reform the public service and develop the community sector in order to address this incapacity. Many of the reforms were reflected in the Goss government's *Making Government Work* (1989). The policy document called for the:

... re-assertion of Cabinet controls, an end to proliferation of statutory corporations, reduction in the number of departments to the minimum possible and introduction of proper performance reviews for the public sector (Australian Labor Party 1989: 3 cited in Coaldrake et al 1992: 7).

This was an era of deteriorating national and state finances. Many western countries were experiencing declining wealth during the 1980s and 1990s contributing to the shift to governance, as discussed in chapter one. Despite economic pressure, government, including that of Queensland were able to continue to offer services by shifting some of the costs of these services to the market. As former Queensland Treasurer during the Goss era Keith De Lacy noted in 1992:

We are not the lucky country any more ... The challenge today is implementing economic reform to address the problems we as a nation must solve ... we are consuming more than we are producing, importing more than we are exporting, spending rather than saving (De Lacy 1992: 110).

Economic rationalism and the need for fiscal responsibility coloured Treasurer De Lacy's views on the role of 'lobby groups':

My bottom line is that government decisions have to be made in the so-called 'public interest' – for the well-being of all Queenslanders. I have become convinced that we cannot afford to be side-tracked or hijacked by lobby groups, even those within the Labor movement, who interests do not coincide with the 'public interest' (1992: 111-12).

The Goss government initiated a number of institutional reforms. While many of these were taken in response to the Fitzgerald Inquiry (Coaldrake et al 1992: 3), there was recognition

that in the previous governmental era economic growth was emphasised to the “detriment of other political and social considerations” (Fitzgerald 1989 cited in Coaldrake et al 1992: 4). With this in mind, the Goss government initiated reforms which would “balance ‘financial efficiency and economy’ with ‘accountable government, individual rights and democratic principles’ ...” (Fitzgerald 1989: 149 cited in Coaldrake et al 1992: 4).

It has been suggested that the impact of neoliberal thinking occurred later in Queensland than in the other Australian states. While the Goss government had been dealing with the repercussions following the Fitzgerald Inquiry, other Australian states were wrestling with reforms associated with economic rationalism (Coaldrake et al 1992). The Goss government was not as preoccupied with the privatisation of public utilities, as other state governments of this vintage. Housing stress had been building for some time and in 1988-89 a National Housing Policy Review was undertaken, but as Troy (2012) writes the review was “basically overtaken by events including a National Housing Summit in 1989 that drew attention to a developing housing crisis” (2012: 204). The Goss government demonstrated commitment to the development of the community housing sector and embraced community consultation as a valuable governance tool:

... the current government [Goss Labor Government] and administration [are] in (sic) the process of building an expanded sector at the same time as increasing the supply and improving the management arrangement of community and public housing” (Queensland Shelter: circa 1990a).

There was mounting pressure from the federal government to develop the community housing sector. Prior to the election of the Goss government, the 1984 Commonwealth State Housing Agreement had included an “innovatory community housing program, the Local Government and Community Housing Program...” (Wiseman 1986: 30). Federal Housing Minister Brian Howe (member of the Hawke Labor Government) instigated the National Housing Strategy in 1990, which had impressive terms of reference, and called for the inclusion of non-state actors in developing housing solutions, including Shelter. The terms of reference encapsulate the large scope of the project and the emerging inclusion of the community sector in developing and delivering housing solutions.

The enthusiasm for public consultation and inclusion of non-state actors found a small and under resourced community sector within Queensland. As an organisation, Shelter was “in the frequent position of having to respond to requests by government for advice when

Shelter has no policy basis from which to give that advice” (Queensland Shelter: circa 1992). The purpose of consultation was also debated by many non-governmental groups: elevation was quickly replaced by disappointment regarding the level to which non-state actors could participate in policy making. While “euphoria developed in anticipation of a democratisation of government in Queensland” some were left feeling a little let down by the actual process, which was under resourced and remained under the control of the state (Caulfield & Davies 1995a: 238).

The election of the Goss government enabled the overnight transformation of Shelter from outsider to insider interest group. Members of Shelter had developed relationships prior to the Goss Labor Party winning power. In particular Tom Burns, the newly appointed Housing Minister was supportive of Queensland Shelter, having met members during political rallies. Following the election of the Labor government on the 7 December 1989, Shelter gathered momentum working up policy through interactions with housing workers and other members of the community sector. Burns inherited a housing department with the lowest rate of public housing in Australia, “at 3.5 per cent – half the national level” (Troy 2012: 214). Burns was committed to change: “... Tom was driven by a passion after a very long period in Opposition to make substantive changes” (Smith 2011, *Queensland Speaks*, 00:17:22-00:17:31). Former senior public servant Ken Smith recalls that Burns was particularly passionate about social housing reform:

He was a delightful Minister, very committed to reform in public housing and as Deputy Premier, he at the time chose the, the housing portfolio because of his commitment to seeing major reform in public housing and some de-stigmatisation of the ... Housing Commission brand to move away from everything being vanilla and similar to some diversification ... of the way that public housing was provided (Smith 2011, *Queensland Speaks*, 0:15:36-0:16:15).

As part of the reform, the Goss Government established the Department of Housing and Local Government in 1989. For the next fifteen years the Department of Housing and Local Government worked alongside of the Queensland Housing Commission, until the Commission was abolished in 2004.

Deirdre Coghlan, alongside other members of Shelter, had worked tirelessly to form relationships with the Labor Party while they were in opposition. “... we supported, we visibly

supported Labor politicians at their rallies” (Coghlan 2011 interview by the author). Coghlan describes meeting Tom Burns:

”I can remember being at a housing rally at Red Hill one week and then at Caloundra the next week ... Tom Burns was at both and he walked up to me at Caloundra and he said ‘where do you come from?’ .. And so he sat down with us ... “(Coghlan 2011 interview by the author).

Coghlan explained how some of these conversations were later represented in opposition policy, “The Labor party was adopting our policy as housing policy ... before the election” (Coghlan 2011 interview by the author). The election of the Goss Labor government created a favourable political environment for Shelter, “So once we got the new government in, well that was when we blossomed” (Coghlan 2011 interview by the author).

As housing minister Tom Burns actively encouraged people from the housing department to attend Shelter meetings to “go out there and listen to the people” and to “listen to what the issues were” (Coghlan 2011 interview by the author). On appointing Ken Smith as the Director-General of Housing Tom Burns asked Smith to attend a Shelter meeting: “... the first thing he told him was, ‘you’d better get out to a Queensland Shelter meeting. I want you to meet the people and these are the people you need to listen to’ ...” (Coghlan 2011 interview by the author). While it was clear that Tom Burns supported the work of Shelter, the organisation did not receive any funding from the Queensland government until 1991.

In 1991 Minister Burns set up a review into community housing in Queensland, to examine current service provision here and in other Australian states. Shelter was involved in the review process hosting a workshop at its inaugural conference in August of 1992. The conference was held from the 27th to the 29th August in Townsville. Federal MP Gary Jones attended on behalf of the Federal Minister for Health Housing and Community Services, Mr Brian Howe. State Housing Minister Tom Burns was also in attendance. In the early 1990s public housing remained on the agenda, and in Jones’ address he spoke of the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) agreement of \$4 billion (over four years), set aside for state provision of public housing. But he also spoke of the commitment to the “new Community Housing Program”. Community housing would be developed through the Local Government and Community Housing program (LGCHP). The purpose of the program was to develop the capacity of the community housing sector, which “had been in operation

since 1984 and has proven to be a valuable vehicle for the development of community based housing initiatives” (Jones 1992: 16).

The 1984 CSHA had included an “innovatory community housing program, the Local Government and Community Housing Program ...” (Wiseman 1986: 30). Australian states were slow to react to the program (Troy 2012) but at this time the Keating Government continued to work to secure commitment from each of the states. The Goss administration demonstrated more commitment to this program than had the previous government – likely a mixture of the Queensland Labor Party’s commitment to community involvement as well as increasing pressure from the federal government to develop the capacity of the community sector to address rising issues regarding housing affordability. Burns was certainly dedicated to the development of the community housing sector in Queensland.

Let me say in the clearest possible terms, we are committed to the expansion of community housing through a range of direct services that include construction projects and generating new local employment in the private building sector ... (Burns 1992: 19).

It was clear that Burns saw a role for Shelter in developing the community housing sector in Queensland.

In the field of community housing, this government encourages local input and to this end, we will continue our funding of organisations such as Queensland Shelter (Burns 1992: 19).

In 1991 members of Shelter received funding for two paid staff and further funding to host a state wide housing conference.

Housing Bureaucracy

While it was clear that Minister Burns valued the work of Shelter, the relationship between Shelter and the housing bureaucracy was ambivalent. Eleri Morgan-Thomas, Shelter’s first paid coordinator, recalled that when she started with Shelter she took responsibility for developing a relationship with senior public servants working in the housing portfolio. This was a strategic move, the volunteer membership had successfully developed relationships with the minister and his staff, but relationships with the state bureaucracy were less developed but seen as equally important. During my interview with Morgan-Thomas she stated that the relationship with senior public servants was positive:

I worked mostly with the department at that time ... because everything was up for change it was about how you helped shape that change ... I remember it [the relationship between the department and Shelter] being quite a close collaborative relationship” (Morgan-Thomas 2013 interview by the author).

Speech notes from the era, however, reveal that the relationship in the early days of Morgan-Thomas’ tenure was irregular. In a speech made in March 1993 to members of the housing sector Morgan-Thomas compared Shelter’s relationship with the government to that of the housing department:

We need also to look at our relationship with the Department. At an opening of the Shelter office in 1991, the then Minister Tom Burns described the relationship as a “marriage” – as he cut the cake with his arm around me and Donna! I wonder how successful the relationship is between the Department and the sector.

We are expected to be one half of a **partnership** but the playing field isn’t level. Most of the time we don’t have a bat and ball to take home if (sic) we don’t like the rules. (Morgan-Thomas 1993 emphasis in original)⁴⁴.

Tensions continued, with cracks forming in the relationship between Shelter and members of the Goss government. Eleri Morgan-Thomas opened her editorial in the May 1992 Newsletter with:

As long as individual organisations are accountable to both the government funding agencies and to the communities that they serve, then they must be able to organise their internal affairs in any way in which they choose (Morgan-Thomas 1992: 1).

Former senior public servant with the Queensland Housing Department, Penny Gillespie attributes this to the political era rather than a reflection on Shelter.

My recollection was that there wasn’t a lot of interaction, it wasn’t particularly strong there would have been an awareness that there was this organisation. The Department was not a very mature organisation then, and so it kind of went on and did its thing. I think there would have been some views from some senior bods in the department ... about working with peaks ... Ken Smith and Dick Persson ... they

⁴⁴ Speech delivered to the Community Rent Scheme training session held in March 1993

would have had a sympatric ear, I think, to peaks but I don't think it was really ... embedded as a thing that you did (Gillespie 2013 interview by author).

Former Director-General Dick Persson⁴⁵'s recollection was community groups like Shelter did not have much to complain about and that the tolerance for open criticism of the government that funded them was low.

Because we had come from such a low base and had done so much wonderful work they [community groups] weren't really going to complain too much. Tom Burns wasn't really comfortable though with anyone like that being critical. He still had a foot in a tough political camp and so that if, you know, Shelter put out a press release criticising something he was likely to ... 'cut their funding or whatever.' There was still pretty tough Queensland politics at play (Persson 2013 interview by the author).

Eleri Morgan-Thomas spoke of the reforms occurring during that period, explaining that formal lobbying took a backseat to the involvement in the development of policy and ideas and Shelter's representational role:

Because they [housing bureaucracy] were reviewing everything. I think that a lot of what we did was write submissions, organise forums you know all those sorts of things about giving people a voice. I didn't do a lot of the sort of lobbying that you might do now, which is about wanting something to change where you've got a set position ... because everything was up for change, so it was about how you helped shape that change (Eleri-Morgan Thomas 2013 interview by the author).

When I asked Morgan-Thomas why she thought Shelter was in a better position to gather the views of Tenants and housing sector stakeholders, she explained the role of Shelter in gathering information and then analysing this with a view to putting forward some policy ideas based on best practice:

... now that I think about it and occasionally talked to Ken and Viv about it, that they [Goss Government] probably didn't have staff in there, they had staff in the old culture and it was about wanting to get different ideas and outsourcing ... And it wasn't just tenants it was about a range of stakeholders and they preferred that to come through

⁴⁵ Dick Persson was the Director-General of the Queensland housing portfolio (1989-1994).

us rather than have them [Department] have to do that ... (Eleri-Morgan Thomas 2013 interview by the author).

Morgan-Thomas recalled that at times there were things that Shelter wanted to change but that criticisms are best made within the context of the impacts of policy decisions.

.. if it is a decision you are criticising, you would suggest, this is why, this is why it doesn't work, this is the alternative and this is the impact on tenants ... In policy terms it is always best to be constructive (Eleri-Morgan Thomas 2013 interview by the author).

Shelter used direct language in conversations with the Queensland Government after receiving initial funding. In a policy submission to the Residential Tenancy Law Reform Review Committee in 1991, submitted after the organisation first received funding from the Queensland Department of Housing and Local Government, Shelter made criticisms of the way in which the organisation thought the Review was handled. In the document, submitted to the Queensland Government, Shelter were particularly scathing of the consultation process:

The Review process should be a consultative process. Merely calling for submissions to a set of inadequately framed guidelines is not public consultation. Given the present Queensland government's (sic) commitment to community consultation - Shelter expects that proper consultation will occur in the future stages of the Review.

The Review process to date has not been consultation. The community was inadequately informed about the process that was being undertaken. For example, no information was presented to potential participants on the expected time frame for decision making, the composition of the Review Committee, who would be making the decisions and so on (Queensland Shelter 1991).

Terry Mackenroth replaced Burns as Minister for Housing Local Government and Planning in September of 1992, remaining with the department until the Goss government lost power in 1996. Commenting on his appointment to the housing ministry Mackenroth commented on his role in developing policy prior to the election of the Goss Government:

... housing had been a great interest of mine and I'd written all the policies for housing, so. Tom Burns had been the minister for three years in housing and had

implemented most of them and it was really a case of me continuing that ... (Mackenroth, *Queensland Speaks*, 23:11-23:25).

Mackenroth was highly respected, both within his own party and by members of the Opposition: his Liberal party successor, Dr David Watson, spoke well of him: "I have a great deal of respect for Terry. He was an extremely knowledgeable, you know, extremely knowledgeable minister ... he knew a lot about what was going on" (Watson 2011, *Queensland Speaks*, 34:39-34:52). Mackenroth was regarded as a powerful player within his party: "Even before he became treasurer, Mackenroth was a decisive influence in the government" (Preston 2003: 407).

Following the appointment of Mackenroth, the housing ministry continued to demonstrate commitment to the development of the community housing sector, causing some concerns within the social housing sector regarding the supply of public housing. Shelter sought the views of the sector attempting to clarify its position on the role of public housing and/or community housing:

We need to decide how committed we want to be to public housing, whether we would be prepared to accept cuts in funding for public housing if it meant an expansion of what we now call the community housing sector (Morgan-Thomas 1992: 4).

Despite the promises of the Goss Government for inclusive community development and input into policy, some frustration was felt by members of Shelter. In an address to a Shelter forum held on the 29 November 1990, Eastgate outlined issues associated with the machinery of government:

Governments in our age are so arranged that areas of policy are divided into neat compartments. Someone in one office is working on a review of the public housing system. In another office, in another building, someone else is working on local government building regulations. Someone in another city is working on taxation law. Yet all these factors and many more interact to produce our housing system, and more broadly the set of systems which impact on our lives. Here, where we live, policies do not fall into neat compartments. We are whole people and the various parts of our environment affect us as people. It is important, then, that planning and policy be geared to responding to the needs of people where we live, with all our many and varied dimensions (Eastgate 1990: 5 emphasis in original).

Shelter had developed a relationship with the Labor party while they were in Opposition and as the Goss government's confidence grew, Shelter continued to work as an insider group, receiving for the first time, in the early 1990s, some government funding to employ staff. These resources enabled Shelter to develop a branch structure in order to facilitate regional representation.

The analogy of an open door has been used to signify the willingness of the Goss government to engage with Shelter and other non-government organisations. This door replaced the virtual lock out by the previous governments. But enabling participation in policy process requires more than just a willingness to be inclusive. Using the same analogy, I argue that while the Goss government created an 'open door,' the door opened to reveal a cramped consultation room. It would be some time before Queensland legislators and bureaucrats developed the structures and processes needed to capitalise fully on the knowledge held by the not-for-profit advocacy sector. The Goss government were responsible for the beginnings of a reform process which eventually led to participation by Shelter in many aspects of the policy making process during the Beattie era.

Chapter Seven:

On the periphery (1996-98)

During the Borbidge National Party government (1996-98) the relationship between Shelter and the housing Ministry was cordial but distant, with limited opportunity for Shelter to contribute outside of routine public consultation. Shelter was on the periphery, consulted but not encouraged by the Queensland National Party government led by Robert Borbidge to actively participate in the development of social housing policy. The Queensland housing ministry continued to fund Shelter but funding agreements were short-term and often came through at the last minute. Shelter was reactive, responding to policy discussion initiated by the housing ministry. Peripheral insider status took some pressure off Shelter who used this time to further develop its own policy platform, in readiness for the next shift in political opportunity (Khan 2013 interview by the author).

While the Goss government was preoccupied by accountability, the Borbidge government focussed on efficiency and private market solutions. Public policy was framed within an economic rationalist paradigm, with a continued focus on market orientated policy solutions. The Borbidge government trialled several different programs in order to improve efficiency, the Priority Housing Program, privatisation of the management of public housing and also conducted a review into funding arrangements for community housing. Emphasis on the development of community housing continued, and was also a 'nod' to the Commonwealth whose confidence in market-based solutions was undermined by the pesky problem of a growing waitlist for public housing. Between 1992 and 1997 the number of Queensland households waiting to access public housing had rose steadily from just over 22 000 to nearly 26 000⁴⁶. In an attempt to make ends meet, the Commonwealth government, through the CSHA, steered each of the Australian states to move away from investing in new public housing, continuing to focus the state government's attention on the role that community organisations could play in providing social housing.

⁴⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Social Trends. Various Issues 1995 to 1999.

The 1995 Queensland election produced an inconclusive result. The Goss government remained in power but the close election results saw pressure from both sides of politics for recounts in several electorates. Wayne Goss eventually called for a by-election in the seat of Mundingburra, which was held on the 3 February 1996. The result of this ballot was that Independent Member Liz Cunningham became, albeit temporarily, one of the most powerful political figures in Queensland. After deliberating for a week, Cunningham chose to form government with the Coalition and Robert Borbidge became the thirty-fifth premier of Queensland. At the time, “Few reasons were given publicly for her [Cunningham’s] stance ...” (Wanna 1996: 421). But in 2012 during an interview conducted for the *Queensland Speaks* oral history project, Cunningham explained that she had chosen to form government with the conservatives due to her perception that Queenslanders wanted change. In her own words, “The issues in my electorate certainly came to play but I believed that overwhelmingly the people in the state had said that they were looking for change” (Cunningham 2012, *Queensland Speaks*, 00:25:40-00:25:49).

It proved a shaky start for the newly elected minority government. The Borbidge government faced criticism for bringing back former senior public servants from retirement and for changes to the tenure of these roles. Department heads were employed on either a three year contract, or until a change of government (Scott et al 2001). Limited tenure of this type undermined the traditional role of public servants to offer ‘frank and fearless advice.’ It was also noted by Professor John Wanna that a:

vacuum of experience in policy matters was a major liability to the new government as it tried to make an impression and begin to improve services and stimulate economic development (Wanna 1996: 423).

Former Queensland Director-General Jim Varghese⁴⁷ noted that while there was some initial government suspicion of the capacity of the public service to provide “advice on hard issues” (Varghese 2011, *Queensland Speaks*, 01:09:15) this changed as the Borbidge government gained experience:

I think what you had there was some suspicion of the public service and as they [the Borbidge Government] were in government a bit longer that suspicion started to recede ... (Varghese 2011, *Queensland Speaks* 01:09:16-01:09:26).

⁴⁷ Varghese was the director-general of several Queensland departments between 1991 and 2008.

Like previous conservative governments, the Borbidge Government focussed on “health, law and order, and infrastructure” (Metcalf 1996 cited in Wear 2003: 392). Queensland political scientist Dr Rae Wear concluded that:

... his [Borbidge's] premiership echoed that earlier National Party regime: the Union Jack once again flew at Parliament House, deals were done with the police, the public service was politicised, and parliamentary convention was overturned, all against a background of enthusiasm for development (Wear 2003: 393-94).

Borbidge's leadership style, however, differed from previous Queensland National Party leaders: “Borbidge seemed unsure, sometimes drawing towards the Bjelke-Petersen style while never appearing comfortable with it” (Wear 2003: 387). Commentary in *The Courier-Mail* suggested that this was perhaps because “his natural persona is more “new age sensitive guy” than brawny tough man” (Lehmann 1998 cited by Wear 2003: 393).

The broader political landscape had altered dramatically since the Bjelke-Petersen years. Reddel and Woolcock write that this government operated under an “emerging place and community policy trend in Australian public policy” (2004: 76). Reforms to social housing policy during this period were developed within the burgeoning rhetoric of increasing non state participation – contrasting with the authoritarian style that characterised the Bjelke-Petersen Government. Queensland did not return to the ‘closed shop’ decision making style of Bjelke-Petersen: strategies of public policy development had begun shifting and while the Borbidge government embarked on a period of privatisation there was also commitment to inform and at times listen to the community sector. The Borbidge Government continued to fund the not-for-profit sector with “approximately \$107 million in funding to community organisations and local government for the provision of housing and housing-related services” (Phillips. Queensland Parliament. Estimates Committee. 1997: 217). Public housing reforms, which mirrored those made by the Commonwealth and other Australian state governments, were introduced with the dual aim of reducing public costs and improving efficiencies (Marston 2000: 353). Neoliberal reforms were illustrated by portraying public housing as a welfare issue rather than as a right of citizenship. At the same time “... the neo-liberal turn has been expressed through the tightening of expenditure on public housing in Australia, the US, the UK, and New Zealand, among others ...” (Groenhart & Burke 2014: 129). During this period all governments within Australia began ‘reforming’ public housing. Jacobs et al explain the Australian government's policy direction during this period:

... public housing should be only made available for those with acute needs, the introduction of probationary tenancies as a way of regulating behaviour, and providing subsidies to landlords to encourage investment in the private rental market (Jacobs et al 2010: 7).

The Queensland housing ministry was no exception, increasing rents for new public housing tenants, placing new public housing tenants onto fixed term leases and “tightened eligibility of public housing” by “lowering income thresholds and requiring tenants to produce two written reference reports before being housed” (Marston 2000: 353). This was a radical shift from early incarnations of public housing which represented a tenancy for life. Housing ‘need’ came to dominate policy decision making as public housing was slowly eroded by community housing. The Priority Housing Committee tightened eligibility for public housing so that the citizens with the ‘highest’ need were prioritised for public housing. The Borbidge government also undertook a major review of all recurrent community housing funding programs,⁴⁸ *Future Ways, Future Means*. The aim of the review was to ensure community organisations were “delivering the most appropriate and effective outcomes and meeting the greatest housing needs” (Phillips Queensland Parliament. Estimates Committee 1997: 217).

The Borbidge Housing Ministry

Two housing ministers served during the Borbidge era, Raymond Connor⁴⁹ and David Watson⁵⁰. When Raymond Connor was appointed Housing Minister he was relatively unknown by Shelter members:

He [Connor] was interesting (sic) but not deeply wedded to the portfolio. I don’t think he’d even been the shadow before then, because you don’t always know how those things are going to turn out” (Morgan-Thomas 2013 interview by the author).

Shelter had not developed a connection with the conservatives while they were in opposition. Morgan-Thomas struggled to recall the strategies that Shelter had used with the Opposition (Morgan-Thomas 2013 interview by the author). The minimal links between Shelter and the conservative opposition in the Goss era were in part due to the belief that

⁴⁸ Including The Community Rent Scheme, Housing Resource Service, Community Housing Resource Worker, Homes Assist/ Home Secure

⁴⁹ 26 February 1996 to 28 April 1997

⁵⁰ 28 April to 26 June 1998

the Opposition would not gain power. “Nobody really expected them to get in” (Morgan-Thomas 2013 interview by the author).

Unlike the pre-existing relationship between Shelter and the Labor Party, the conservative parties were known to have closer ties with business and religious groups. Clear lines drawn on political ideology have come to mean a lot less than they did during the 1960s and 70s. Party ideology between the two parties has become, outwardly at least, much closer. Reforms to public housing, and other services delivered by the government in the last several decades are underpinned by economic rationalism – adopted by both sides of politics. Policy in the last few decades was developed through the preference of efficient and effective management practices (underpinned by fiscal stress) and to a lesser extent the beliefs and values of political parties. Scholars refer to the third- way as the “political convergence”, of old terms of right and left wing politics which encouraged the development of contracts between the state and the not-for-profit sector in the provision of social goods. ‘Community’ based organisations were viewed as the way forward with Adams and Hess noting that “Australian versions of the ‘third-way’⁵¹ all have a key role for community” (Emy 1994; Latham 1996; Argy 1998; Tanner 1999, 2000 cited in Adams & Hess 2001: 14).

Morgan-Thomas recalls an agreeable but distant relationship developed between Shelter and Connor during his period as minister. They meet on several occasions, and both attended a United Nations conference in Istanbul.⁵² On one occasion, Morgan-Thomas recalls Connor was unhappy with a criticism made by Shelter to the media and she was asked to meet with him in his office. As Morgan-Thomas recalls this did not appear to cause much damage to the relationship:

We did have one occasion where ... he [Raymond Connor] was unhappy about something we had done and so he did call me in ... He wasn’t happy about it but he just took it on the chin and moved on” (Morgan-Thomas 2013 interview by the author).

Raymond Connor became a highly controversial figure in the Borbidge ministry, with a number of incidents contributing to his ultimate resignation from the front bench. He

⁵¹ The third-way is defined here as the ‘coming together’ of old terms of right and left wing politics which encouraged the development of contracts between the state and the not-for-profit sector in the provision of social goods (Adams & Hess 2001).

⁵² Habitat II – Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements held on 3-14 June 1996.

infamously missed an important vote in parliament – as a result the Borbidge government was unable to pass its Public Service Bill. He resigned from the Ministry in April of 1997.

At the time of his resignation, Deputy Premier Joan Sheldon publicly commended Connor for his work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing issues while also stating “He has made a few foolish mistakes” (Lehmann 1997). Connor returned to the backbench where he remained until his electoral seat was abolished in 2001. Former public servant Penny Gillespie recalls that as the housing minister, Connor was committed to the continued development of community housing but also had a particular interest in public housing wait times and on improving housing in the Torres Strait (Gillespie 2013 interview by the author).

David Watson was appointed Minister for Housing and Public Works on the 28 April 1997. Watson had served as the deputy leader of the Liberal Party from 1990 to 1992 and was considered a “commerce specialist” who the party believed could “accelerate the Government’s \$4 billion capital works program” which had been criticised heavily for the speed in which the government was rolling it out (Laffan 1997). Within the first six weeks of his ministry, Watson attended a Senate Estimates Hearing Committee in order to defend the proposed expenditure on Housing and Public Works. During the hearing Watson praised the Queensland Housing system as having the second lowest waiting list in the nation.

Queensland is in a fortunate position as we have a fairly efficient housing sector already and any changes that we will introduce - and let me say, no decisions have been made - will be made for future tenants (Watson. Queensland Parliament. Estimates Committee 1997: 210).

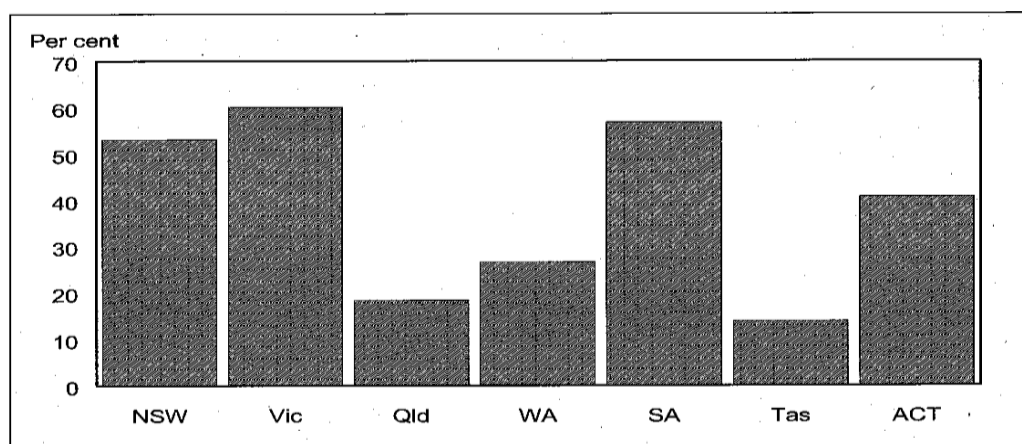


Figure 1: Proportion of public housing applicants waiting more than 2 Years at June 30 1995

(Source: Australian Government. *Review of State/Commonwealth service provision report* Melbourne: Commonwealth of Australia 1995a)

In comparison to the other Australian states and territories, Queensland did appear to be in a better position, with the second lowest wait times for public housing, as shown in Figure 1. This graph however, does not capture the existing disparity between regional areas of Queensland. Families on the Gold Coast were waiting up to four years before securing public housing: in other parts of Queensland the wait was a great deal longer. On Thursday Island for example people were waiting up to twelve years (Ackfun. Queensland Parliament. Estimates Committee. 1997: 219). During the Borbidge era wait times for public housing would steadily increase, as did the waitlists in most Australian states (Troy 2012).

Prior to the appointment of Watson as the Minister for Housing, Morgan-Thomas had resigned from her position as the coordinator of Shelter, accepting a role with the NSW Housing Federation. Tracey Douglas, who was frequently on the Board of Shelter, was appointed as the interim coordinator until Roksana Khan was appointed in March 1998 following a formal selection and interview process. Khan's early impressions were that Shelter had "a very good committee ..." but "I was not used to this confrontational approach to government" (Khan 2013 interview by the author). Khan's experience with the Australian government was that it "wore a supportive hat and actually helped us to write submissions to get money ..." The government played a role in developing the sector (Khan 2013 interview by the author). In contrast her early experience with the Queensland government, as the coordinator of Shelter, led Khan to note feelings of distrust between the NGO sector and governmental staff. Khan argues that despite the differences she was able to build partnerships with many of the people in housing because she came from outside of Queensland and although Khan was aware of the baggage of the past, she did not carry it herself (Khan 2013 interview by the author).

Khan recalls that it was not easy to get a meeting with Minister Watson, "Shelter was not an organisation they had much time for anyway" (Khan 2013 interview by the author). Despite limited contact, Khan respected Watson, who she felt "judged the merit of our arguments" (Khan 2013 interview by the author) without judging the ideological position of the organisation. Khan (accompanied by members of Shelter's Management Committee) recalls that she met with Watson on two or three occasions (Khan 2013 interview by the author). Khan describes the tone of the meeting as one in which engaging with Shelter was viewed as a duty rather than as a vital source of information from the community housing sector. In her opinion the view of Watson towards Shelter was:

Best not to not meet them but when I do meet them let's not create any reasons for future conversation or more conversations ... Let's not upset them ... on the other hand let's not do anything either (Khan 2013 interview by the author).

This is not to suggest that Watson was opposed to working with community or commercial organisations. Shelter was not engaged by Watson to work as an insider during this period, but Watson did enable other groups to actively participate. During an interview with David Watson conducted as part of the *Queensland Speaks* Oral History project, Watson describes how he encouraged the participation of a consortium of commercial construction organisations to develop a policy submission for Cabinet. In another example, provided by Watson, he enlisted members of the social housing sector to draft a letter to public housing tenants, informing them of changes to their public housing tenancy.

In the first example Watson describes a process of working with fourteen organisations within the construction industry, including the Housing Industry Association (HIA), Master Plumbers and the Master Builders Association in order to develop policy for consideration by Cabinet. Watson describes how he worked with this network:

I actually sat down with the construction industry, and the group that was in charge of it ... Over half a dozen months we hammered out an agreement which I was able to take to Cabinet and get complete approval and I had fourteen of those people sign off on it ... I actually got the whole fourteen together in a room ... and hammered out the final thing myself ... I think I got the feedback that they were very impressed the Minister actually had complete understanding of the detail (Watson 2011, *Queensland Speaks*, 00:44:02-00:45:04).

Watson describes how support from these organisations, as representatives of the construction industry, was important in “getting things through Cabinet” but that conversely their demands were constrained by the Cabinet process:

And I told them things like, look I might agree with you on that, but I can't get that through Cabinet, I'm not even going to bother so if that's your answer, if that's what you want then we haven't got an agreement. And then I'd say yeah ok that's tough but I'll get that through. So I actually helped, you know, put together the package in a way that got their [building organisations] support and I could get it through Cabinet (Watson 2011, *Queensland Speaks*, 00:44.04-00:45:32).

In this example non-government actors, in this case commercial, had input into the preparation of policy for consideration by Cabinet. In the second example, Watson describes how he engaged tenant advocacy groups to draft a letter to public housing tenants in Queensland. The purpose of this letter was to inform public housing tenants about incoming changes to tenancy law. In describing the interaction between him and members of the social housing sector there is less emphasis on the development of policy but recognition of the benefits of engaging members of the sector to disseminate information to public housing tenants. While the Tenants' Union was consulted and involved in the development of material used to inform public housing tenants, they were not involved in the development of the policy proposal itself. As Watson explains:

The other thing was the public housing ... First of all I thought we needed to reform the way public housing was done ... I think about 2 800 of these tenant unions [Exaggeration by interviewee] and I went and saw a lot of them ... And I actually spoke to them and we actually sent out some letters at one stage, and I got some feedback ... 'if I was an academic, if you had a PhD you might understand the letter, but it was totally hopeless for getting to us people in public housing.' So when we got to the public housing reform what we said well ok well you come and help write the letters ... But more importantly we had a long series of discussion with people about the kinds of issues that were really concerning them ... We put together a ... set of reforms which we thought would have fairly broad support and, but for me it was also starting to address the, I think the abuse that was occurring by some tenants, I mean not all tenants ... So we, we put together a package and I took that to Cabinet (Watson 2011, *Queensland Speaks*, 00:45:32-00:47:29).

During the interview, Watson suggested that the package was leaked to the press, which brought forward the public announcement. Informing public housing tenants of the upcoming changes was prioritised, with Watson engaging members of the social housing sector to develop a letter which could be more easily understood:

We decided that the best way of handling the issue was to simply announce it ... we just announced all of the reforms ... We had people who had volunteered to come in and did the letters ... We developed the letter in the afternoon ... I sent a letter personally signed to every tenants union ... explaining what we were doing (Watson 2011, *Queensland Speaks*, 00:48:23-00:49:30).

Watson argues that the involvement of the community housing sector helped to legitimise the policy decision and paved the way for acceptance from the public housing sector: “Did we have any reaction from the Tenants’ Union .. ? No we really didn’t ... we actually had some of their people actually help us, you know, put the letters together. So we got the communication, I think basically correct” (Watson 2011, *Queensland Speaks*, 00:49:49-00:50:09).

Both examples demonstrate the different levels of engagement that can occur within a given consultation process. Arnstein’s well-known Ladder of Participation (1969) illustrates the degree to which power is shared during a ‘consultation’ process.

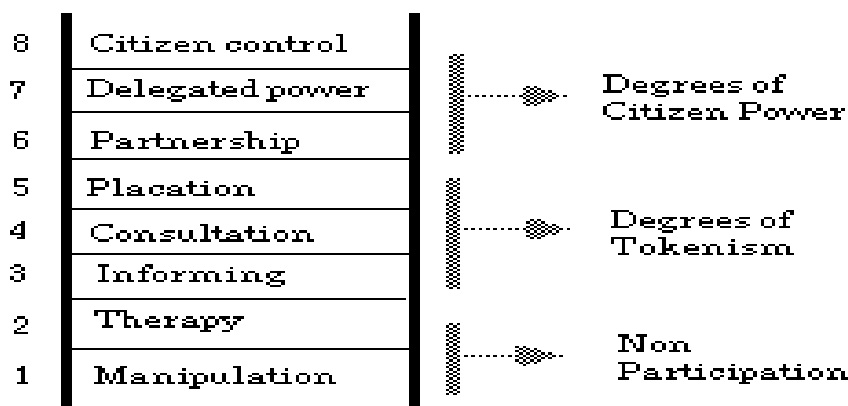


Illustration 9: Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (1969). Illustration source: Wilcox 1998

Applying Arnstein’s ladder of participation to the first example, there was a combination of placation and consultation; Watson worked with representatives to come to an ‘agreement’ before developing the policy submission for Cabinet. This agreement, however was developed within the constraints of what Watson thought would be acceptable by Cabinet; there is no indication that power was shared between the Minister’s office and the construction group.

Further information is required to determine the level of participation by members of the social housing sector. Drafting a letter could fall into any rung between manipulation and placation. This extremely small sample cannot be used to make any broad assumptions regarding Watson’s inclination to include the social housing sector, but instead is used here to illustrate the differences in engagement and the impact of the various levels of engagement on policy development.

Prioritising public housing for the ‘most needy’

From the mid-1990s the federal government progressively introduced policies which shifted attention and resources from public housing to the burgeoning community housing sector (Gabriel & Jacobs 2006, Troy 2012). By 1995 nearly 26 000 thousand Queensland households were on a wait list for public housing.⁵³ The 1996 CSHA agreement increased funding for the development of the community housing sector: although Troy (2012) notes that “the level of funding increased substantially but not enough to make up for the fall in Commonwealth support for public housing generally” (2012: 196).

As the Commonwealth retreated from public housing, some funding was redirected to support the development of the community housing sector. Several states within Australia implemented priority housing systems’ (Water. Queensland Parliament. Estimates Committee 1996: 6) shifting from a wait turn⁵⁴ system of allocation to a priority⁵⁵ system; supported and encouraged by the Commonwealth (Queensland Parliament 1997). Former senior housing bureaucrat Penny Gillespie recalls that during this period there was also a notion of ‘deserving poor’:

But the Borbidge government, I clearly remember they had views that you had to be both poor and deserving. ...I don’t suppose ... deserving ever got into a policy document because they would never appear, but that was the intent ... [Deserving] being good, ‘showing a bit of an interest in your life’ maybe if you’d had things happened to you that were beyond your control you would be seen as deserving ... That notion wasn’t there before, that was a kind of new notion that crept in (Gillespie 2013 interview by the author).

The Borbidge government established the Priority Housing Committee in order to implement a system in which the provision of public housing would be based on ‘need’. The first meeting of the (Queensland) Priority Housing Committee was held in December 1996. The formal role of the committee at this stage was to devise a “strategy which allowed for the introduction of its important priority housing policy in the shortest possible time, yet allowed

⁵³ Department of Housing, Local Government & Planning 1994/95 Annual Report page 29 cited in Shelter 1997.

⁵⁴ Wait turn refers to “a process of allocating housing to those who have been on the waiting list the longest” (Queensland Shelter 1997b).

⁵⁵ Priority refers “to a particular need or circumstance that is said to be greater than others” (Queensland Shelter 1997b).

for housing interest groups to have clear channels for policy enhancement and access to the committee members” (Carfoot Queensland Parliament. Estimates Committee 1997: 224). Curiously, in light of the formal acknowledgment of the importance of the housing interest groups to “have clear channels” for participating in policy development, (Carfoot. Queensland Parliament. Estimates Committee 1997: 224) most of the committee members were outside the housing sector.⁵⁶

There were 90 applications for membership on the committee, and from this process 13 “were selected on merit” with most members demonstrating “experience in (for example) youth, aged care, the law and social work” (Morgan-Thomas circa 1997). Most members of the committee worked in sectors which were familiar with the dilemmas of those needing to access affordable housing. Penny Gillespie explained this mixture as “the early attempt to understand that housing did not operate in isolation and that there were other issues in people’s lives” (Gillespie 2013 interview by the author). In a similar vein senior public servant Eric Carfoot told the Estimates Committee in 1997 that “The members of the committee themselves were selected and endorsed by Cabinet because of their expertise and community links and because of their capacity to make recommendations to the Minister on the most effective priority housing policy for Queensland” (Carfoot. Queensland Parliament. Estimates Committee. 1997: 223).

The Priority Housing Committee (PHC) was involved in the analysis of existing public housing policy and the development of policy reform; at one stage the PHC directed the Queensland Housing Department to research the priority housing systems in other Australian states. Shelter was not represented on the committee but the Department continued to acknowledge the importance of input from the broader community sector. “The community organisations and individuals will be encouraged to contribute post implementation policy improvement ideas by direct contact with individual committee members, written submissions or formal meetings with representatives of the committee” (Carfoot. Queensland Parliament. Estimates Committee 1997: 223). The PHC also met with the Queensland housing peaks as part of an ‘extensive’ consultation process (Carfoot. Queensland Parliament. Estimates Committee 1997: 224).

⁵⁶ Members of the Inaugural Priority Housing Committee were: Dr Janet Irwin (Chair), Juliet Gross, Beryl Holmes, Frank Lippet, Pam Maher, Rose Colless, Glenda McChesney-Clark, Lorna Moxham, Geraldine Neal, Margaret Phillips, Geoff Smiley, Margaret Steinberg (Eleri Morgan-Thomas Circa 1997).

On 6 January 1997, the PHC met with several housing policy peaks, including Shelter “to discuss its policy concerns and expectations, with each committee member spending up to two days consulting with a variety of housing interest groups in their local areas” (Carfoot. Queensland Parliament. Estimates Committee 1997: 223). Morgan-Thomas noted several issues were raised by the social housing peaks:

Shelter pointed out that the sector does not hold a consistent view about the necessity of a priority housing system. Some think it is absolutely necessary, others think it leads to queue jumping and others think that the Community Rent Schemes (CRS) are a better option for priority housing.

QDHC [Queensland Disability Housing Commission] warned of the undesirability of housing excessive numbers of people with psychiatric disabilities in one area - possibly close to outpatient services that they may need to access. What happens to people who get priority listing for disability modified housing but there is none. There will have to be good links between the capital works side of things and the priority housing system.

QDHC warned that the costs of applying for priority housing shouldn't be borne by the applicant. An example could be the costs of getting psychiatric reports to prove a genuine case.

The impacts of the priority housing system on CRS must be considered. It will be important to see priority housing and CRS as complementary rather than competing. Shelter suggested a joint working party of the PHC and the CRS Association to look into coordination between the two.

A lengthy discussion took place about the ability of priority housing to provide housing. Priority housing will not expand the amount of housing available, particularly in areas where there is low levels of stock already

(Eleri Morgan-Thomas circa 1997)

Shelter made a formal policy submission to the Review of Priority Housing after consulting their membership. Shelter's overall position on a priority housing system was that the 'need' to rationalise housing was based on a lack of housing supply. While appreciating that a priority system may help those who need it 'more', there was concern that some people would remain on the list indefinitely, due to perception of 'low need'. But the shortage of public housing was not a political priority at this time: the Priority Housing Committee was raising the bar for access to existing housing stock.

In the submission made to the Queensland government regarding priority housing in November 1997, Shelter suggested a hybrid of both systems: “the overall means of making new public housing and transfer allocations should involve a combination of both wait-turn and priority housing systems” (Queensland Shelter 1997c: 4). In this submission the organisation made a number of recommendations:

Recommendation 1: A Priority Housing system is necessary but should not be at the expense of those already on the wait turn list.

Recommendation 2: A percentage of public housing should be retained for priority allocation.

Recommendation 3: The types of circumstance that should qualify as “priority” to include the following:

- ‘severe crisis’,
- ‘medical condition’, and
- ‘domestic violence’.

Recommendation 4: Priority housing allocations should be available in all public housing areas.

Recommendation 5: An independent appeals mechanism should be available under a priority allocation system, and should focus on response times, independence and locality

(Queensland Shelter 1997c: 4-7).

One of the first responsibilities of the Priority Housing Committee was to write policy regarding a Priority Housing system. The Committee was also responsible for assessing applications for public housing. Aside from making a submission as part of the formal consultation, Shelter was not invited to participate in the development or implementation of Priority Housing policy. They remained on the periphery; formal submissions were accepted but did not appear to have much impact. It is unclear whether any of the ideas or suggestions regarding the Priority Housing system made by Shelter or other organisations, would eventually have been accepted by the Borbidge government as the committee was abolished by the incoming Beattie government. In 2013 Labor Minister Robert Swarten retrospectively declared the PHC:

... bullshit in my view. You cannot abdicate the responsibility of the minister to an advisory group ... You've got a whole department that can advise you ... All that did was convolute the whole process (Schwarten 2013 interview by the author).

Restricted to the outside, Shelter engaged in outsider strategies, using the media to gain public attention for issues in order to try and influence the government on policy direction. One issue that gained attention was the closure of boarding houses in the inner suburbs of Brisbane. Boarding houses typically provided more affordable inner city accommodation for single people, especially older men. In just under a decade one third of Brisbane's boarding houses were demolished or redeveloped for different purposes (Morgan-Thomas 1997b). In March 1997 Shelter and the Tenants' Union of Queensland published press releases which called on the government to retain the remaining boarding house stock.

Shelter's media release used emotive language to harness citizen support for boarding house residents:

I want to paint you a picture of a reasonably typical boarding house resident. Imagine an older single adult male receiving a benefit from the Department of Social Security. He's lived in the boarding house for more than 5 years ... The rent here is a bit expensive and there's not much left out of the pension, but he likes being close to the shops, in an inner city area where everyone looks a bit odd and no-one stands out and where he can get into the hospital for his regular check-ups ... (Morgan-Thomas 1997b).

Boarding house tenancy reform was a recurring issue on the Queensland political agenda throughout the twenty-five-year period covered within this thesis. The Tenants' Union of Queensland and other members of the social housing sector, including Shelter, had unsuccessfully advocated for the inclusion of boarding houses under the Residential Tenancies Act (1994).

'Future Ways & Future Means': Queensland Shelter

The social housing sector was divided between ideology and pragmatism on the shift from public housing to provision of housing by community groups. Academic and former member of the Shelter Management Committee, Greg Marston argued that "The continuing entrenchment of market-orientated policies in public housing, symbolized by the reforms, created considerable conflict among members of the policy community" (Marston 2000: 353). There was concern that the development of community housing would come at the

expense of public housing. This concern was ongoing and would continue well into the next government period. In a submission to the *Future Ways & Future Means* program proposal, Shelter warned the Department of Housing of possible distrust developing within the social housing sector:

The sector will predictably be likely to react negatively to changes along those lines, particularly if they think that there was a hidden agenda during the consultations. Indeed many already suspect that there was. The Grants Board should be aware that there will be significant resistance to changes anyway, and more so if the sector thinks it has been misled. This highlights the need to manage any change sensitively and by ensuring that the sector is willing to go along with any changes that are suggested. (Queensland Shelter 1997a: 2).

Future Ways & Future Means was a review of community housing programs, undertaken by the Housing Ministry in 1997. The aim of the project was to “review the basis for existing recurrent funding programs and advise the Minister on the policy and funding processes which best achieve the highest priority needs and outcomes” (cited in Queensland Shelter 1997a: 1). Four community housing programs were reviewed: Community Rent Scheme, Housing Resource Service, Community Housing Resource Workers and Home Assist/Home Secure (Queensland Shelter 1997a). Linda Apelt who became the Director-General of the Department of Housing in 1998, explains how this was an early attempt to shift the management of social housing to commercial providers:

Future Ways Future Means was about testing the viability of the private sector taking on the portfolio as a rental and portfolio manager ... and I guess once we got really close to it, it just didn't seem to make sense. There was strong lobbying from staff within the regional offices as well as from tenants, to say 'hey we don't like this, we don't think this is as efficient as what the government was doing and how they used to do it before' ... (Apelt 2012 interview by the author).

The Borbidge Government lost power before many of these reviews had any impact on housing policy. One member of the Queensland public service, who did not wish to be named or recorded for the purpose of this research, suggested that this review process caused some members of the public service some work dissatisfaction as the review process did not go anywhere. My research on this particular program was impeded by the reluctance of key participants to discuss it.

The Borbidge government continued to provide funding to Shelter, with a slight increase in funding over the period as illustrated in figure 2. News of the continuation of funding was however, often conveyed at the last minute. Government funding is one sign of interest group success, although little is made of this in the academic literature. “A big event this year was the funding of a policy and research worker ... Shelter has been trying for years to get funding for a policy and research worker and it is great that it has finally happened” (Gould 1997: 1). This success contrasted with the winding down of the CSHA consultation project which experienced uncertainty during this period. “This has been a difficult year for the Project. Funding has been a problem, and there was a time when the workers were given redundancy notices. The funding came through at the last minute, but not in time to keep Lyn Luxford, who left to work with Brisbane City Council (Gould 1997: 1).

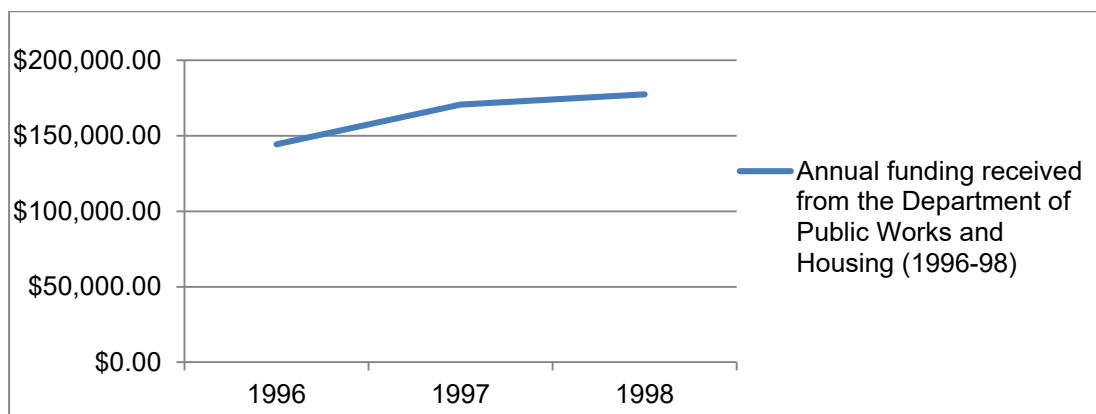


Figure 2: Funds received from the Borbidge Government (1996-98)

(Graph developed from Queensland Shelter annual reports 1996-98)

Although funding levels were steady, “Funding periods became shorter and for the first half of the year, like others, Queensland Shelter was on month to month funding” (Gould 1997: 1). Grant (1989) recognised resources as an important aspect of interest group effectiveness. Funding is an obvious source, but the way in which funding is delivered also impacts on the capacity of an organisation to advocate effectively. “The impact that this [short-term funding contracts] combined with continuing funding uncertainty, had on staff morale and therefore productivity should not be underestimated” (Queensland Shelter 1997d: 4). The capacity for Shelter to research and develop policy was constrained during this period, by small staff numbers and funding that came through at the last minute. During the 1996/97 financial year Shelter commissioned two research projects: an analysis of the impact of the proposed rent assistance model and a second project on the changes to community housing (Queensland Shelter 1997d).

Privatisation of public housing trial

A one-year pilot of private management of public housing was announced by the Queensland Department of Housing in the later part of 1997. Chesterton International and Network Real Estate were awarded, through a government tender process, the management of 5 000 public housing units in the Stones Corner and Woodridge areas. "The Department of Public Works and Housing is moving towards the privatisation of public housing. It is proposed that some of the tenancy management functions such as rent collection, maintenance and property inspections be outsourced" (Queensland Shelter 1998: 3).

Shelter was adamantly opposed to the use of private real estate agents to manage public housing tenants on the grounds that:

Public housing is and should be about housing justice ... The real estate industry operates from a profit motive so it is difficult to imagine how real estate agents will be able to incorporate the current practices of the Department (Queensland Shelter 1998: 3)

Reflecting on the privatisation trial sometime after, former senior housing public servant Penny Gillespie argues that the decision to trial privatisation of public housing was driven by ideology:

They obviously had the view that things could be done better by the private sector ... I doubt that was a particularly well informed decision ... I think it was ideological. ... some decisions are about a government or minister saying we would like to achieve x. 'You the department come and tell us how we can achieve x' ... There is nothing wrong with that ideology necessarily but ... clearly it was not well thought out because it failed miserably (Gillespie 2013 interview by the author).

The Queensland Services Union weighed into the issue of privatisation by sponsoring a campaign, Public Housing Works – Coalition against Privatisation, urging "groups, organisations and individuals to join. Involvement can be anything from circulating petitions to participating in strategy meetings" (Public Housing Works - Coalition against Privatisation Flyer: circa 1997). Similar coalitions had developed in other parts of Australia, the United States and Europe, where similar experiments with privatisation were embraced to manage public housing. The privatisation trial went ahead despite objections made by Shelter and others.

The incoming Beattie Government did not pursue management by commercial organisations when they come to power. Former Director-General of Housing, Linda Apelt, explained the issues of getting a private provide to manage social housing tenancies

The poor private provider was finding it extremely challenging to be able to manage a social portfolio, they were only ever used to managing ... other private rentals out there ... The tenants in the social housing portfolio were much more resource intensive ... much more property damage, more call outs that sort of thing ... I think they were starting to realise if there was money to be made in this, the private sector would have been in this a long time ago. There is actually a big subsidy, government subsidy that goes into this program because it is a public service (Apelt 2012 interview by the author).

This is not to suggest that the incoming Beattie government were opposed to working with the private sector. Former Housing Minister Robert Swarten argues that the Beattie housing ministry “formed alliances with the REIQ and real estate agents ... to move people who we thought would make good tenants into the private sector” (Swarten 2013 interview by the author).

During the Borbidge period, Shelter operated as a peripheral insider group, involved in consultation but unable to participate in the development of policy. Neither of the housing ministers during this era was open to engaging Shelter in the participation of policy development, although both Ministers had limited dealings with Shelter as per the rhetoric of ‘community engagement’. The Queensland government was under pressure, through the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement to rationalise public housing to the ‘neediest’ and at the same time there was a gradual emphasis on developing the community housing sector. Wait lists for public housing grew, along with relatively rapid population growth, rising maintenance costs, housing affordability and diminishing Commonwealth funding.

The community sector was identified as a way to fill some of the gaps: diversifying the way in which social housing needs could be met. Shelter was on the periphery, as an organisation that had long advocated for an increased supply of public housing. The Shelter Board belatedly came to recognise that the provision of social housing was shifting towards the community sector, especially new start-up housing providers. Shelter, in conjunction with the Tenants’ Union of Queensland used outsider strategies to draw media attention to the issue of tenancy rights. But they had little success in more conceptual aspects of housing provision, failing to persuade the conservative government to buy or at least subsidise the

existing boarding house stocks which continued to decline. Of course, many occupants of the boarding houses were on Commonwealth government benefits – from disability and unemployed allowances to the old age pensions, and some of these were also eligible for a rent subsidy.

Chapter Eight:

Shelter on the inside (1998-07)

Queensland Shelter became and remained an insider group during the Beattie era. A relationship based on collaboration and trust developed between the Executive Officer of Shelter, Adrian Pisarski and the Minister for Housing, Robert Schwarten. This chapter examines this relationship within the context of several major reforms to social housing policy during this period: the development of the Brisbane Housing Company, The One Social Housing policy and a review of state funding to housing policy peaks. The result of the 2007 review into peak funding was that Shelter was funded as the 'peak' social housing group, relocated to larger and rather glamorous government-owned premises. As a result of the move to the new premises, the additional responsibilities and a new policy and strategy team, as well as additional administrative staff the capacity of the organisation to engage with the government and state bureaucracy expanded. Despite insider status, Shelter avoided advocacy capture, continuing to provide critical assessment of government action and proposals.

From the start the Beattie Labor Government demonstrated a strong commitment to community consultation. A consultative style concurred with Peter Beattie's populism and the impact of burgeoning pockets of dissatisfaction within electorates around Australia. A new federal political player, Pauline Hanson capitalised on locational inequality, calling for the 'right to a fair go' for ordinary Australians. While support for the One Nation Party was "spatially specific" (Davis and Stimson 1998 cited Reddel and Woolcock 2004: 76), the One Nation Party won 11 seats in the 1998 Queensland election. Smyth and Reddel argue that the election result encouraged the Beattie Government to initiate a range of programs that would engage and empower citizens:

Initially based on the need to address the electoral success of the Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party in 1998, a range of initiatives have been constructed by the Beattie Government in Queensland around the need to respond to increasing citizen

alienation and disillusionment with traditional political and policy processes (Smyth and Reddel 1997 cited Reddel and Woolcock 2004: 76).

Following the 1998 election, the Beattie Government enjoyed a relatively long period of strong political support and “By late 1999 Beattie had emerged as the most popular premier in the country” (Wanna 2000: 237). This was a period of radical cultural change with Queensland. The Beattie Government’s Smart State’ agenda grew from an initial promise to increase “workforce skills” and improve “overall education standards” (Salisbury 2013: 33) to an overarching strategic direction, which underpinned and propelled the development of many areas of public policy within Queensland.

The Minister for Public Works and Housing (1998-2009)

Robert Swarten was appointed Minister for Public Works and Housing following the 1998 election. Prior to this appointment he had served as Opposition Spokesperson for Lands and Natural Resources. Preceding his political career he worked both as a carpenter and a teacher. Swarten was infamous for his colourful language and outbursts, both in parliament and elsewhere. The language he used in parliament could favourably be described as passionate and less favourably as bad-mannered: “The Halloween pumpkin is at it again!” (Queensland Parliament. Record of Proceedings 1991a: 6528), “I can see the honourable idiot from Flinders engaging in sleight of hand” (Queensland Parliament. Record of Proceedings 1991b: 7780) and “Sit down, you ratbag” (Queensland Parliament. Record of Proceedings 1991c: 286).

During his interview testimony for this research, he described both the difficult decisions governments face when housing need is greater than supply and the vulnerability of those experiencing housing stress. His interview, like many others conducted for this PhD research, was interspersed with anecdotes regarding the impact of public policy on individuals. Swarten recalls the difficulties in providing suitable public housing for families with a child with a disability. According to Swarten the department could spend up to a million dollars on one dwelling in order to provide purpose-built accommodation. If the child were to pass away the family might be asked to move to another dwelling, so that another household (who had a member living with a disability) could reside in the modified accommodation:

It's a pretty hard thing to do, look a family in the eye and tell them [that they had to move] ... I could see it through their eyes too, but I also had to see it through the eyes of the next family that was waiting (Schwarten 2013 interview by the author).

At the start of his appointment as housing minister, Schwarten demonstrated a willingness to hear from his department staff as well as members of the social housing sector. He hosted the Housing Policy Retreat, at the Legends Hotel Surfers Paradise, in November 1998. The purpose of this housing retreat was to gather information in order to reform housing policy:

The retreat is an important activity in the overall process. It presents a unique opportunity for policy decision makers and department staff to discuss and consider a range of critical issues confronting the department. The retreat won't give us all the answers but will help us to identify spheres of activity and influence ... (Queensland Government 1998).

While Schwarten was impressed by the policy capacity of the department staff he was critical of the way in which the previous government had utilised the bureaucracy:

We had some excellent people who had up until then basically had a collar around their neck and the government basically said this is the policy coming from us. And I always saw policy making as a two way street. I wasn't there to be dictated to by the department and the department wasn't there simply to be dictated to by me (Schwarten 2013 interview by the author).

While a very limited number of community housing groups attended the Housing Policy Retreat many more were consulted.⁵⁷ Shelter was one of the three non-government organisations which were invited to attend. Roksana Khan attended as Coordinator of Shelter, Penny Carr represented the Tenants' Union of Queensland and Michael Willett attended on behalf of St Vincent's Community Services (Queensland Government 1998).

⁵⁷ The following organisations submitted papers: Aborigines and Islanders Alcohol Relief Service Ltd, Aboriginal Coordinating Council, Australian Pensioners & Superannuates League Queensland Inc., Local Government Association of Queensland, Cairns & Regional Housing Corporation Ltd, Cairns Housing Network, Caravan and Mobile Home Residence Association, Combined Church Community Service Forum, Community Rent Schemes Association Queensland, Council on the Ageing Queensland Inc., Far North Queensland Regional Tenant Advisory Group Inc., Island Co-ordinating Council, Thursday Island, Joint Ministerial Advisory Committee Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure, Queensland Advocacy Inc., Queensland Community Housing Coalition, Queensland Council of Social Service Inc., Queensland Tenants Public Assn. Inc., Shelter, Rural Community Housing Peak Organisation, South East Queensland Youth Accommodation Coalition, South Queensland Council for Homeless Persons Inc., Combined Women's Refuge Group, Pine Rivers, Redcliffe, Caboolture and Kilcoy Accommodation Reference Group, Tenants Union of Queensland's North Queensland Office.

Schwarten had first met Khan when Terry Mackenroth was the Minister of Housing during the Goss era and Shelter had made a favourable impression (Schwarten 2013 interview by the author).

Former Shelter Coordinator, Roksana Khan recalls that it was a great deal easier to arrange a meeting with Robert Schwarten than it had been with David Watson. “He [Robert Schwarten] would call us on a Friday afternoon and say, ‘Come over I want to talk to you about this’ ... “(Khan 2013 interview by the author). Despite recollections of the ease of access to Schwarten’s office and the inclusion of the community housing sector in the Housing Policy Retreat, former housing Director-General Linda Apelt⁵⁸ recalls that Schwarten had some misgivings about the role of peak advocacy groups in the development of policy, recollecting early suspicion from Schwarten’s office towards Shelter, as a community sector organisation. Apelt describes how at the start:

There was also a lot of animosity between Shelter and the Minister and I think that was more that the Minister had a bit of a suspicion about community sector organisations anyway and what value did they add for what they were costing?” (Apelt 2012 interview by the author).

This distrust was not based on any personal relationships or prior experiences with any of the housing peaks but instead was based on the issue of representation. As Apelt explains:

I think at that time politicians thought, well who are these people representing the interests? They have never been elected. What right do they have to represent interests and to lobby on behalf of someone? They haven’t been elected, they’re just appointed. And so Robert Schwarten used to talk about, well how about we structure these groups like Shelter and others a bit like the way the unions are structured ... and you have a bit more of a representation structure. (Apelt 2012 interview by the author).

Shelter was able to demonstrate representational capacity; engaging the views of the sector through regional branch membership and state-wide housing conferences. Shelter’s policy mandate was also broader than that of other housing peaks, which covered specific populations, including youth, disability and housing co-operatives. In 2002 Schwarten indicated an intention to reduce the number of funded housing peaks. As part of this initiative

⁵⁸ Linda Apelt was Director-General of Housing from 1998 to 2004.

he requested information from Shelter regarding its role and purpose. Shelter responded with a fifteen page report which provided information on the “purpose, role and operation of Shelter as a housing peak body and of the mechanisms that exist for the provision of advice to you as the Minister for Housing.”⁵⁹ In the submission Shelter argued that it was an umbrella peak, with a role in bringing together satellite peaks (Queensland Shelter 2002: 8). Swarten did not reduce the number of funded peaks at this time but the distinction made by Shelter in this document regarding the capacity of the organisation to act as an umbrella peak became particularly relevant in the review of funding to social housing peaks conducted in 2007.

The capacity for a peak to act as an umbrella for the social housing sector was highly regarded by Swarten and was an important factor in the continued funding of Shelter, discussed in the later part of this chapter. Despite some initial misgivings about the role of not-for-profit advocacy groups, Swarten was open to developing a relationship with Shelter; he made himself available to meet with staff and committee members. In the opening address of the *Shelter Annual Report*, former Shelter management committee member Coralie Kingston writes:

I acknowledge the Department of Housing for the ongoing funding of Shelter and for the relationship that is developing continually. A special acknowledgement goes to the Minister of Housing, the Hon. Robert Swarten MP, for his support and his willingness to meet with Shelter (Kingston 2002).

Former Shelter Coordinator Roksana Khan describes meetings with Swarten in positive terms, recalling that Swarten was ‘open’ to hearing from Shelter, “He was very committed to housing as a whole and very committed to providing long term support to people ...” (Khan 2013 interview by the author). While Swarten may have displayed an initial uneasiness regarding the representational capacity of policy peaks, he grew to appreciate and trust the advice provided by Shelter. Engagement with community groups during the Beattie era was normalised with the government rapidly expanding avenues for nongovernmental engagement and participation, including a relatively generous level of financial support for some organisations.

Commitment to community engagement

59 Correspondence: Shelter chairperson Coralie Kingston to Robert Swarten, 3 October 2002.

The Beattie Government introduced a range of programs and processes to encourage policy advice from outside the state bureaucracy. One of these programs was the result of a promise made by the Beattie Government to Independent Member Peter Wellington. As in the election of the Borbidge government in 1995, the ballot numbers were tight: but this time there were two Independent members in a powerful position; Liz Cunningham and Peter Wellington.

In an article describing the expansion of community engagement in Queensland, Reddel and Woolcock argue that Peter Wellington agreed to form government with Beattie with the stipulation that the government introduce Community Cabinets (Bishop & Chalmers 2001; Davis 2001: 224 cited in Reddel & Woolcock 2004). However in an interview with Wellington as part of the *Queensland Speaks* project, he credits Peter Beattie with the idea of Community Cabinets, claiming that was how Beattie had responded to a broader suggestion by Wellington that citizens should have more of a say in policy making: “That was how Peter Beattie responded to my proposal for ‘well I think you have to look at how you are going to connect with Queenslanders’ ...” (Wellington 2012, *Queensland Speaks*, 00:21.41-00:21.48).

Judging from the subsequent reforms that Beattie implemented, the establishment of Community Cabinets was not just a concession to Wellington. From 1998 to 2003 the Beattie Government established ten citizen engagement initiatives, including Community Cabinets, the Community Engagement Division, community renewal program, crime prevention strategy, Cape York Partnerships, Brisbane Place Projects and South East Queensland 2021, Far North Queensland 2010 Wide Bay population growth plans (Reddel & Woolcock 2004). The Community Engagement Division was created to “ensure that the public sector injects community ideas into government services” (Scott et al 2001: 198). The Division was responsible for “two projects to influence consultative processes and behaviours across the public sector - the Public Consultation Project and the E-Democracy Project” (Scott et al 2001: 198). Beattie attempted to embed community consultation practices across all departments to reflect the “... attention being paid to consultation and a greater diversity of means of service delivery” (Scott et al 2001: 198). Consultation processes, which had been the source of some derision during the Goss and Borbidge eras, were improving but still faced criticism.

Institutions and policies which encouraged and supported the inclusion of non-government organisations continued to be developed and refined by the Queensland government, but

the limits to this 'consultation' continued to trouble the 'consulted'. In 2000 Shelter and the Tenants' Union of Queensland were engaged by the Department to consult the social housing sector on the *Future of Public Housing* (Queensland Shelter 2001: 3). In a document circulated to members, Shelter criticised the consultation process, disappointed that the consultation was an "information giving" opportunity rather than an "analysis" by the social housing sector (Queensland Shelter 2001: 4).

This political environment, however, provided Shelter with other formal and informal interactions with both the Ministry and the bureaucracy. Consistent and sustained advocacy by Shelter paid off in the lead up to the 1998 election. During the lead-up Shelter advocated (to both sides of politics) the case for regular meetings. Shelter recommended a regular meeting between the peaks and senior members of the government. Shelter was:

... recommending a Ministerial Advisory mechanism which consists of a mix of representatives from the peak housing sector and others that a Minister may deem to be appropriate. A mechanism that is accountable, transparent and with expertise that is able to consider a whole of housing approach to the future development of Housing in Queensland (Queensland Shelter 1998: 9).⁶⁰

It took some time for the incoming Beattie Government to agree to and arrange this reoccurring meeting. This is an example of successful advocacy by Shelter with the first Senior Manager/Peaks forum held on 22 May 2000. The meeting was attended by representatives of several housing policy peaks and senior public servants.

⁶⁰ Shelter repeated this request in their 2000 Budget Proposal submission. This submission was endorsed by The Queensland Public Tenants Association, Queensland Community Housing Coalition, Tenants' Union of Queensland, Queensland Disability Housing Coalition, South East Queensland Youth Accommodation Coalition, Community Rent Scheme Association Queensland, and South East Queensland Council for Homeless Persons, Social Action Office.

The First Senior Managers/Peaks Forum

MINUTES

Monday 22 May 2000

Community Participants:

Christine Grose (Queensland Shelter) *Roksana Khan*
Maria Leebeek (SEQYAC)
Mike Myers (QCHC)
Lorraine Bonnyman and Lyn Luxford (QPTA)
Penny Carr (Tenants Union of Qld)
Ann Tierney and Dianne Bruhn (QDHC)

Department of Housing Participants:

Linda Apelt (for last Item), Donna McDonald (Chairperson), Robin Zakharov, John Nelson, Rhonda Phillips, Fergus Smith, Karen Wing, Natalie MacDonald (facilitator), Alex Ackfun (for part), Maria Tennant, Robyn Wilson (Minute Taker), Samantha Organ-Moore, Sharon O'Donnell, Peter Young (for part).

Illustration 10: Excerpt: inaugural Senior Managers/Peaks forum

The Minutes of the inaugural Senior Managers/Peaks meeting indicate department staff had a high regard for Roksana Khan. At this meeting, Department of Housing staff presented Khan with flowers to mark the start of her maternity leave. A short speech followed where Khan was thanked for her “contribution to the department” (Queensland Government 2000). The minutes also illustrate the common goals of the social housing peaks and the Queensland Department of Housing. Many of the issues raised were consistent between department staff and the housing peaks.

In particular all parties present at the meeting were interested in “influencing the whole system, getting housing back on the social agenda, increasing resourcing for housing ... ” and “ ... particular products and services, such as new funding arrangements” (Queensland Government 2000). Minutes of the first meeting also indicate that the Queensland Department of Housing wanted to work with the community housing sector “effectively and efficiently” (Queensland Government 2000). Several of the housing peaks, including Shelter were invited to give a joint presentation at the meeting on the topic of “working with non-government sector peaks” (Queensland Government 2000) to share views on how this might be better achieved. Increasing formal meeting arrangements had the effect of providing opportunities to develop informal relationships. Formal meetings are important avenues for developing ongoing policy conversations, between various policy actors. As Dalton et al (1996) write, “In the shadow behind the formal process, there is often a series of phone calls, lunches, breakfasts, media leaks, meetings of both a regular and irregular kind” (1996: 107).

Housing bureaucrats engage with peak policy groups for reasons similar to those of the Ministry; social advocacy peaks can be an important source of expertise and provide legitimisation (Maddison & Denniss 2009). The support of a policy peak, such as Shelter, can be strategically advantageous for the bureaucracy. As Peters (1977) notes: “The administrators need the political support and influence of the pressure groups in their external relationships with other political institutions, and they further need the information supplied by pressure groups for making and defending their policies” (1977: 192). While I did not draw the conclusion of ‘co-dependency’ between interest groups and the bureaucracy from my interviews, the senior public servants I spoke with were aware of the benefits of working with policy peaks in the development of social policy.

The role of peaks in acting as sounding boards was highlighted in several interviews with senior public servants. Former Director-General of Housing Natalie McDonald (2004-09), explained the importance of gathering different perspectives:

Testing ideas, exploring issues that are of concern and trying to identify potential solutions to those things. Testing communication and how that works and are we getting the right messages out ... The peaks bring a different perspective ... I valued it during my time to have another perspective being put on the table. Otherwise ... you wallow in your own self-confidence (McDonald 2013 interview by the author).

Former senior Queensland public servant Penny Gillespie also described how public servants might ‘test out’ ideas with members of Shelter and other community groups, illustrating the importance of trust within the relationship:

Senior public servants want relationships that they can trust because they are bound by the conditions of their employment... they are actually bound by law about what they can and can’t do. And so they might want to test things out ... Those relationships are really critical, I think, to NGOS and particularly peaks who want to influence (Gillespie 2013 interview by the author).

The less structured interactions between Shelter and the bureaucracy is illustrative of Shelter’s status as an insider group. While this thesis focuses on the relationship between the Ministry and Shelter, the importance of a good working relationship with the state bureaucracy should not be under-estimated. Insider status is a result of acceptance and invitation by the Ministry, a positive well respected relationship with the bureaucracy is a ‘tick in the box’ towards achieving this acceptance. Furthermore the public service is heavily

involved in the framing of policy problems and solutions. Maddison and Denniss (2009) note their “multifaceted function in the policy process”, arguing that while public servants are “answerable both to their minister and to the parliament, there can be little doubt that some senior public servants play a direct role in policy making, while other public servants influence the policy decisions made by ministers” (2009: 150). Positive relationships between advocacy groups and members of the public service enable peak policy organisations to have influence through discussion and debate regarding the framing of problems, opening up avenues for discussion around policy solutions.

The death of public housing is imminent!⁶¹ Contracting out affordable housing

As commonwealth funding for public housing diminished, discussion around the provision of ‘affordable’ housing intensified. Affordable housing is a contested concept, with some sources acknowledging that it means more than “the relation of costs to income” (Brisbane City Council 2003: 8) and should take into account the housing standard, location and suitability. In purely economic terms affordable housing is usually defined as housing which costs no more than 30 per cent of total income. Aggregate housing affordability is often measured by the 30/40 rule, which refers to overall numbers of “those spending more than 30 per cent of their income on housing, while earning in the bottom 40 per cent of the income range” (AHURI 2015). Figure 3 below illustrates both the growth of community housing and the decline in public rental stock in Queensland during the 1990s.

⁶¹ Heading of article featured in Shelter Newsletter August 2002

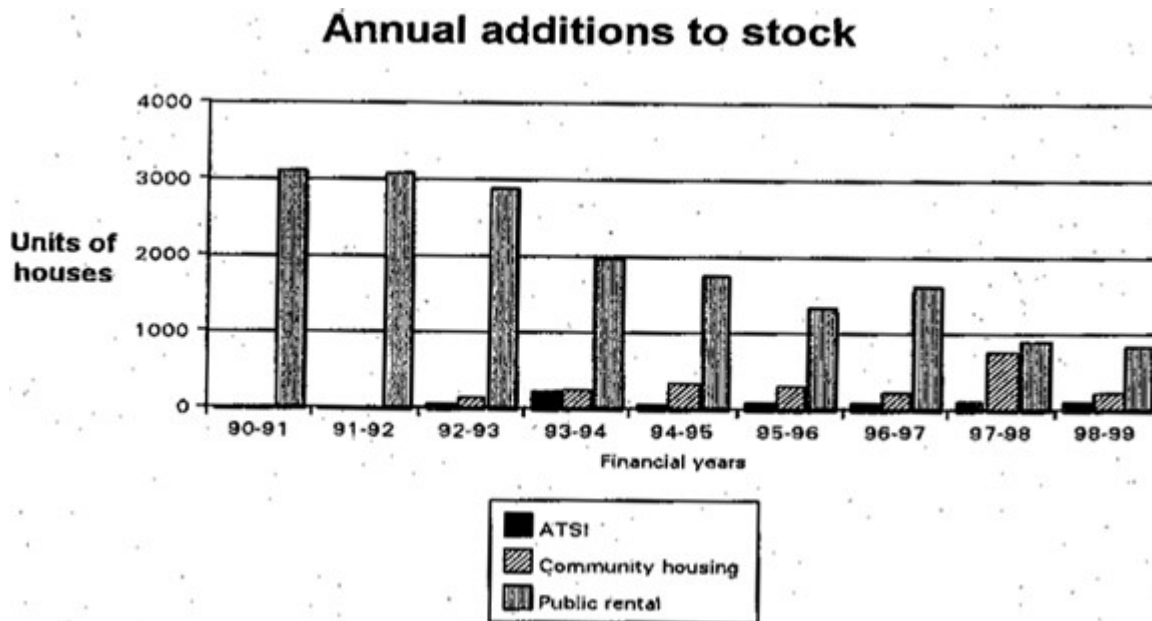


Figure 3: Annual addition of housing stock: Aboriginal and Torres Strait housing, public housing and community housing (1990-1999)

Source: Queensland Government Budget Papers: Ministerial Portfolio Statements pp 2-10, 2-37 Queensland Government circa 2000 in Shelter Submission "Putting People First" Queensland Shelter 2000: 11

Throughout much of this period the federal government continued to encourage home ownership or access to the private rental market, in the form of first home owners' grants and rent assistance payments. Public Housing continued to be rationalised for the 'very' weak and vulnerable; accessible only to those who *really* needed it. In Queensland, population growth and the maintenance of aging housing stock added to the burden of declining federal funding (Queensland Government 2003a: 3).

The focus on 'affordable housing' occurred within a broad welfare reform, which saw the continuation of devolution of services to non-government providers. Large scale privatisation and contracting had also occurred in both the UK and the USA (Austin 2003), where "a broader movement toward complex combinations of diverse institutions drawn from both the public and private sector" occurred (Gais, Nathan, Lurie, and Kaplan 2001: 43 cited in Austin 2003: 97). Earlier in this thesis I identified this as the governance shift; a move from government to governance. This shift continued to impact on the role of advocacy groups and government bureaucracies in the development and implementation of public policy. The Beattie Government continued with the previous government agenda of outsourcing the delivery of 'affordable housing,' although there was less emphasis on contracts with business, with a stronger commitment to developing the capacity of community housing providers.

In 2003 the Beattie Cabinet endorsed the *Housing Department Strategic Action Plan, Improving People's Lives through Housing* (2003-08). A key goal of the plan was to improve "access for Queenslanders to safe, secure, appropriate and affordable housing" (Queensland Government 2003b: 1). The government demonstrated commitment to developing community housing providers in order to develop affordable housing services. The plan contained five goals, and numerous objectives. Several of the objectives related to the development of the community housing sector, illustrating the Beattie Government's intention to work across federal, state and local levels of government, as well as with other agencies and Queensland government departments to develop the capacity of the community sector to manage community housing needs.

The objectives which directly relate to the development of the sector included:

1. Influence relevant policy, statutory provisions and institutional arrangements to maximise responses to the housing needs of Queenslanders;
2. Maximise the opportunities for all stakeholders to plan comprehensively and effectively for the provision of affordable housing in sustainable communities;
3. Initiate new partnerships and mechanisms to deliver affordable housing in sustainable communities;
4. Ensure effective communication, provide key market information and build stakeholder capacity to support initiatives for affordable housing in sustainable communities;
5. Develop and deliver products and services to support the provision of, and access to, affordable housing in sustainable communities.

(Queensland Government 2003b: 13-25).

An outcome of the willingness of the Beattie Government to develop the community housing sector was the establishment of several large scale affordable housing sites in partnerships with other entities. These affordable housing initiatives were characterised by a mixture of tenure and included the new community housing project in Bowen Hills (2001) and the Kelvin

Grove Precinct (2003)⁶² which was built in partnership with the Queensland University of Technology.

Brisbane Housing Company

The Brisbane Housing Company is a not-for-profit entity and the first housing company developed in Queensland,⁶³ established as a result of the commitment to community housing from both the Queensland state government and Brisbane City Council (BCC). Former senior public servant Penny Gillespie argues that the development of the Brisbane Housing Company was the start of the ‘professionalisation’ of the Queensland community housing sector: “Brisbane Housing Company was probably the most critical point actually, because there you are, you’ve suddenly got a professionalised thing” (Gillespie 2013 interview by the author).

While local governments throughout Australia can build and lease housing, this practice is minimal, not least because of the up-front capital required. While BCC had a prior interest in issues of homelessness they were not “the main agency responsible for affordable housing” (Brisbane City Council circa 2003: 6), this had been left to the Commonwealth and State governments. Local councils are integral to the goal of developing affordable housing as they have responsibility for planning legislation (Integrated Planning Act 1997) and were able to use this to “facilitate the development of affordable housing” (Brisbane City Council circa 2003: 6). While the BCC, which at the time held a strong Labor majority and a Labor Lord Mayor, acknowledged that it “cannot hope to make up for the gap in assistance created by shifts in State and Commonwealth policy” they expressed an intention to work with both levels of government to achieve some positive outcomes (Brisbane City Council circa 2003).

An overarching theme of the Council-hosted affordable housing summit (Brisbane Affordable Housing Summit November 2002) was the role of local and state governments in facilitating “private sector investment in affordable housing” (Brisbane City Council circa 2003: 5). In line with the BCC vision that “Brisbane will be a city where all residents have access to affordable, well-costed, secure and physically adequate housing,” (Brisbane City

⁶² For the story of the development of the Kelvin Grove Village see Klaebe, Helen. *Sharing Stories: Problems and Potentials of Oral History and Digital Story Telling and the Writers/Producers Role in Constructing Place*. PhD Thesis QUT Creative Writing (2006).

⁶³ The first housing company developed in Australia was the Aboriginal Housing Company Limited which was incorporated in 1973 and continues to operate from Redfern in Sydney (Aboriginal Housing Company Website 2014).

Council circa 2003: 10), the council resolved to support the Brisbane Housing Company to “add to the supply of affordable housing managed by non-profit organisations in Brisbane”⁶⁴. The Beattie Government committed 50 million dollars in equity towards the Brisbane Housing Company (BHC) while the council committed 10 million (Queensland Government 2002a).

Brisbane Housing Company is a not-for-profit organisation, limited by shares. These shareholders are a mixture of government, commercial and non-profit organisations⁶⁵. There are two types of shareholders, ordinary and community. Both the Queensland housing department and the Brisbane City Council are ordinary shareholders. When BHC was establishing, the ordinary shareholders were responsible for deciding which organisations could be shareholders - individuals are not permitted to be shareholders. Community shareholders must meet the following criteria:

⁶⁴ Objective 1 of the Brisbane City Council Affordable Housing Strategy 2003-05.

⁶⁵ Complete list of shareholders of the BHC, as it is now known, in 2015: The State of Queensland represented by the Department of Housing and Public Works, Brisbane City Council, The Urban Development Institute of Australia (Queensland), Property Council of Australia Ltd, Australian Property Institute Inc, Planning Institute of Australia, Compass Housing Services Co (Queensland) Ltd, Queensland Shelter Inc, Queensland Disability Housing Coalition Inc, Foresters Community Finance Ltd, Communify Queensland Ltd, New Farm Neighbourhood Centre Inc, Churches of Christ in Qld, The Corporation of the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane (operating as Centacare) (Brisbane Housing Company 2015).

- I. The organisation must be a separate legal entity.
- II. The organisation must have an interest in the promotion, support, development and management of urban housing, specifically affordable housing in Brisbane City, and must fall into one of the following criteria:
 - a) a community managed housing organisation;
 - b) a financial institution;
 - c) a religious or charitable institution;
 - d) a private housing development company;
 - e) a housing or building industry organisation;
 - f) a community welfare service agency;
 - g) a tenant advocacy organisation;
 - h) a business that employ more than 50 employees within Brisbane City; or
 - i) a significant trade union or employee representative organisation.
- III. The organisation must not be:
 - a) an Ordinary Shareholder;
 - b) an individual in his or her individual capacity;
 - c) a government or local government; or
 - d) a statutory authority or government-owned corporation established under a law of the Commonwealth or a State.

Illustration 11: Excerpt: a guide to the Brisbane Housing Company

Source: (Queensland Government 2002a)

Expressions of interest were tendered: with a written application required to be submitted in order to be considered as a community shareholder. While the shareholders were able to participate in and influence the business of the Brisbane Housing Company this was not an example of power sharing between the government and community sector. The Queensland housing department remained in a position of authority, the only policy actor to have two shares in the Brisbane Housing Company; the other ordinary shareholder, BCC only having one share. The ordinary shareholders retain the authority to choose community shareholders and the Chair of the Board of Directors. In addition ordinary shareholders retained the right to remove the chair at any time. The ordinary shareholders may also give a 'default event' notice if the company failed to pay bills, breached the shareholders agreement or made a 'misrepresentation to a lender' (Queensland Government 2002a: 20). If the notice is ignored or performance does not improve, the situation can escalate to a failure event and lastly a termination event. The ordinary shareholders retained the right to terminate the board. The effect of this was:

... that all Directors elected by the Community Shareholders cease to hold office and the Company must redeem all Community Shares. It is then at the absolute discretion

of the Ordinary Shareholders to direct the company to issue new Community Shares (Queensland Government 2002a: 21).

The first affordable housing complex to be managed by the Brisbane Housing Company opened in mid-2002. The complex cost over seven million dollars and consisted of seventy units, “a mix of boarding housing, one and two bedroom units and studio apartments” (Queensland Government 2002a).

The establishment of the Brisbane Housing Company was a radical departure from business as usual in meeting the housing needs of people on lower incomes. It was also an opportunity for local government involvement (Queensland Shelter circa 2000: 20). At this time the Queensland state government was winding up the Queensland Housing Commission, and the establishment of BHC provided a good departure from the ‘old ways’ of providing housing. As Linda Apelt explained in an interview with Queensland University of Technology student Helen Klæbe:

We had a new piece of legislation that was on the drawing board, a new Housing Act. Which was essentially abolishing the Housing Commission and introducing a new piece of legislation that was very much about embedding housing affordability into a whole range of economic and social policy context within the community (Apelt 2005 cited in Klæbe 2006: 322-23)

Shelter remained cautious and conflicted about any proposed changes to the way in which social housing was offered. “We had a lot of arguments in the management committee about it” ... because “of different perspectives” (Khan 2013 interview by the author). Broader debates were occurring at Shelter regarding the shifting government support from public to community housing:

Is this the new form of governance – finding someone else to blame? Tenants in the private rental market blame the Real Estate Agent or their private landlord for an unfair outcome in their housing; perhaps this is the new risk management strategy by government (Queensland Shelter circa 2002: 22).

Khan credits some of the issues to a “deep distrust” (Khan 2013 interview by the author) about the intentions of government, with the view by some members of the social housing sector that this was the beginning of the total sale of public housing. The BCC engaged with the sector in order to alleviate some of these concerns. Jon Eastgate, one of the founding members of Queensland Shelter, who was at this stage working for the BCC on the Brisbane

Housing Company project explains how the community sector were brought into discussions regarding the management committee of BHC:

We then tried to pull in community organisations at that point to say ... 'do you want to be shareholders in this [community housing] company?' They were very worried because they saw it as replacing public housing and being a less affordable alternative to public housing. (Eastgate 2013 interview by the author).

Eastgate argues there was some justification for this concern, based on the way in which rents were calculated and also the fear that BHC would "take resources from public housing and put it into this option instead and the very poorest people, who a lot of those community agencies were working with daily, wouldn't be able to get access to it because they wouldn't be able to afford it. (Eastgate 2013 interview by the author). While Shelter remained critical of the amount of rent to be charged, they were not influential in changing the mind of Schwarten on this issue:

I could understand what they [Shelter] were saying but at the same time I wanted a market driven place where people out of public housing could go to, the next stage ... I didn't want public housing to only be for the last resort ... To put it frankly I believe that 25% of people's income is too lenient for housing and I think that what we were offering was excellent conditions, well suited ..." (Schwarten 2013 interview by the author).

Executive Officer replaces Shelter Coordinator

In 2002 Roksana Khan resigned from the Coordinator's role at Shelter to take up a position with Brisbane City Council. After a short period of Christine Grose serving as the locum director of Shelter the management committee appointed Adrian Pisarski as the Executive Director. At the time of his appointment, Pisarski had twenty-two years of community sector experience, across four Australian states. Pisarski brought his own understanding regarding the role of peak advocacy groups in the development of public policy. One of the first challenges Pisarski faced was a review of peak bodies. Schwarten was keen to reduce the numbers of funded state housing peaks, although he was unsuccessful at this time.

The first issue I faced was a review of peak bodies ... I was pleased when the Minister told us in December he was keeping the status quo among peaks. I have been through three peak reviews in NSW, one in Victoria and two at a national level. They always focus from the Minister's or D.G.'s perspective and are always looking for a

more efficient and streamlined way of engaging the sector. If completed they invariably disenfranchise some aspect of the sector and give more responsibility and work (but never more money) to those remaining (Pisarski 2003: 5).

It was not until after the 2004 state election that the relationship between Swarten and Pisarski was cemented through a series of events. Frustrated by the lack of discussion regarding affordable housing during the election period and disappointed that Swarten had declined an invitation to the 2004 Shelter state housing conference due to a clash with the Rockhampton show, Pisarski sent a forthright letter to Swarten's office.

In this same letter, that I was suggesting that it was important for him to attend our conference, not this show, I also questioned if anybody was looking after housing policy because everyone seemed to be talking about racing as far as I could tell (Pisarski 2011 interview by the author).

Upon receiving the letter Swarten asked that Pisarski and the Chairperson of Shelter's management committee attend a meeting in his office. Swarten was not happy with the content of the letter and Pisarski recalls that the meeting began with Swarten demonstrating his displeasure.

... and gave me a fifteen minute tirade full of swearing and he didn't hold any language back at all. I was sitting there fuming and getting angrier and angrier ... [he] told me that 'it was the worst letter he had every received as Minister', I didn't think it was a bad letter, and 'he wasn't coming to the conference' ... (Pisarski 2011 interview by the author).

Pisarski recalls recognising that a direct approach was needed in order to explain why he wrote the letter and what Shelter hoped to achieve.

Anyway I said to Swarten, 'Have you finished because I want to tell you why we wrote that letter' and he was taken a bit aback by that ... And said, you know, quite calmly ... 'The reason we wrote that letter is because we had twelve months where housing is an important issue. You're telling us to be solutions focussed, you want us to discuss what's wrong, give you ideas etc., and there wasn't one word about housing in the whole election campaign. Your government didn't talk about it, there wasn't a policy, not an announcement, nothing and you expect us as a peak body to sit back and just be happy about that?' (Pisarski 2011 interview by the author).

Pisarski identified this as a defining moment in the relationship between the Schwarten Ministry and Shelter. Within the pressure group literature on social advocacy peaks, little is written on the role of personalities and interpersonal skills in developing close working relationships. Perhaps good personal relationships are regarded as less important than political expertise or representational capacity or maybe good interpersonal skills are accepted as a given. Within the business management literature these types of skills and attributes are sometimes referred to as emotional intelligence, “how to handle yourself, get along with people, work in teams, leadership” (Goleman 1999). Without the development of some sort of workable personal relationship it is difficult to partake in a close working relationship on policy issues. Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work with a variety of policy actors are essential because these skills enable productive working relationships.

Pisarski attributes the development of a close working relationship to the way in which he had communicated with Schwarten and the capacity of Shelter to provide constructive, solution focussed policy advice.

... After that he was still quite miffed with me but just before the conference two things happened. One was he rang our office and ... said that he had a change of plans and could now attend and ... could we make room on the program ... And the second thing that happened around that time was my mother died and he sent me a really nice personal note about my mother. So when he arrived [at the conference] ... I went to the car and greeted him and I said to him ... ‘Apart from anything else I just want to say thanks for the note about my Mum I appreciate it.’ Ever since then we got on really well and we had his respect and we could do no wrong after that and because he then understood that I was solutions focussed and that I was trying to provide them, and so was the organisation of course, with solutions to our housing problems. That we weren’t just ... another whinging peak. So I think that was really the turning point in our relationship with government (Pisarski 2011 interview by the author).

Schwarten grew to greatly value the policy advice provided by Shelter and spoke highly of Pisarski’s knowledge and contribution:

So I always leaned heavily on Shelter and particularly Adrian, after Roksana had gone - he was there for the majority of my time and I found him to be a very good soul. Someone who was well read, someone who understood the board base philosophy ... and someone who brought a practical head on his shoulders ... (Schwarten 2013 interview by the author).

One of the largest reforms undertaken during this period was a review of the waitlist system. In October 2005 an information paper was circulated to the housing sector, '*Paving the Way: Housing People in Need in the Smart State*' (Queensland Government 2005). The paper explained the need for radical change, proposing a centralised social housing waitlist. The purpose of the paper was to advise the sector that the allocation of social housing would be centralised.⁶⁶ Schwarten credits the One Social Housing policy as the “most controversial” of reforms during his time as Minister (Schwarten 2013 interview by the author). One Social Housing policy came into effect on 1 January 2006. The aims of this policy were clear:

- Simple entry points for clients to all social housing assistance
- One register of need to replace existing lists
- A commonly used process to match clients with the housing assistance that best meets their needs
- Long term social housing for clients with the highest need
- Consistent eligibility criteria for long term social housing programs
- Long term social housing provided for the duration of need
- Housing assistance that changes as client's need changes
- Connecting client to support services
- Improved pathways between the One Social Housing System and the private market (Queensland Government 2005: 11).

Initially the Queensland Government undertook various consultations with the social sector, the process drew some criticism from Shelter:

Despite the difficulties caused by the period allowed for the consultation to take place, we have been able to bring together feedback on this paper from a wide cross-section of Shelter members, community housing organizations (sic) and related service providers” (Queensland Shelter 2008).

In the following years Shelter actively participated in both evaluation and continuous improvement processes of the One Social Housing Policy. In the 2008-09 annual report, Chairperson Wynn Hopkins noted that “Qld Shelter has continued to engage heavily in the

⁶⁶ Social housing included “public rental housing, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rental housing, long term community housing, boarding house accommodation, medium term community housing and crisis accommodation and housing provided in discrete Indigenous Communities (Deed of Grant in Trust Communities)” (Department of Housing 2005: 5)

'new world order' of social housing policy in Queensland - the One Social Housing System (OSHS)" (Hopkins 2009: 2). Hopkins described this project as that which involved "extensive consultation" and resulted in focussed work by Shelter to improve OSHA processes. (Hopkins 2009: 2). Swarten recalled how Shelter ran several seminars on One Social Housing, as they were able to reach stakeholders from right around Queensland (Swarthen 2013 interview by the author).

During this period the participation of Shelter in the development of policy was expanding, with involvement in a number of departmental committees including the Joint Homelessness Reform Working Group, Strengthening Social Housing Reference Group, Review of One Social Housing System and the TAAS [Tenants Advisory and Advocacy Service] with the Tenants' Union of Queensland (Pisarski 2009: 6).

Shelter: the sole social housing peak

In July of 2007 Minister Swarten announced that there would be new funding arrangements for the state based housing policy peaks. The outcome of this process:

... was that was that the peak funding formerly provided to the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition, Queensland Disability Housing Coalition and Queensland Community Housing Coalition was transferred to Queensland Shelter, while the funding formerly provided to the Queensland Public Tenants Association was transferred to the Tenants Union (99 Consulting 2008).

Shelter however received extra funding, were given more tasks and responsibilities and later were moved to larger premises in Spring Hill. In my interview with Swarten he explained the reason behind his preference for one policy peak and why he chose Shelter to be that organisation:

I wanted one organisation that could professionally take on government ... I believe that the way to do it was to properly house and fund Shelter so that all of these groups could be under that umbrella and that a coherent policy structure and advocacy could come out of this group (Swarthen 2013 interview by the author).

Senior public servant Natalie McDonald concurs that "the minister had been concerned for a period of time that there was a significant amount of money going to the peaks collectively and that he wasn't getting a consolidated view ..." (McDonald 2013 interview by the author). McDonald argues that Shelter was well placed to offer a broad view of housing, "... Shelter

was the peak that did tend to, and had tended to over a long period of time, try to bring the voices to the table and put a kind of umbrella over it ...” (McDonald 2013 interview by the author). In 2007 Shelter had 11 branches, eight which were geographically based and three which had formed around special interests.⁶⁷

Linda Apelt, who was the Director-General of Housing at the time, argues that the positive relationship between the Executive Officer and the Minister had bearing on the development of a positive relationship at the organisational level:

I think it is because the CEO at the time was strong. He was prepared to strike up a good working relationship with the minister of the day and I think the minister thought ‘Well here is a credible capable person’ (Apelt 2012 interview by the author).

The ability of Shelter to act as the umbrella peak and provide wide coverage and representation of social housing issues in conjunction with the organisation’s capacity to provide policy advice on problems and solutions contributed to Schwarten’s decision.

Linda Apelt argues that Schwarten respected members of Shelter more than some of the other peaks, “He wasn’t going to give it to the community housing sector because he didn’t have the same level of respect there” (Apelt 2012 interview by the author). Others I interviewed described an uneven history between the some members of the community housing sector and the Queensland Housing Ministry. Former public servant Gillespie explains:

They [the minister’s office] all moaned about the co-operatives because they thought they were a bunch of ratbags. There wouldn’t be a minister who thought the co-ops were any good, they all thought they were terrible because even if they started off thinking they were alright, they actually didn’t like the behaviour that they saw and their ministerial staff saw. (Gillespie 2013 interview by the author).

Former housing minister Robert Schwarten himself noted that Shelter was more constructive than other housing interest groups during the implementation of the One Social Housing Policy, “Community housing resented greatly my interference and this is where Shelter was excellent because what I actually did ... was to say ‘Look I’ve had a gut full of community

⁶⁷ Far North Queensland, North Queensland Branch, Mackay Branch, Central Queensland Branch, Sunshine Coast Branch, Toowoomba Branch, Bayside, Brisbane North, Gold Coast, Inner City, Logan, North Moreton, South West Brisbane, Indigenous Housing Branch, ASHRAM (Agencies Supporting Housing for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants) and Woman’s Housing Network (Queensland Shelter 2007).

housing advisors. All these little groups that ran their own race.” (Schwarten 2013 interview by the author).

The continuation (and increase) of funding to Shelter in the context of other peaks being defunded caused considerable unrest within the social housing sector. In order to work effectively as an umbrella group Shelter needed to unite disparate groups within the housing sector.

In 2008 Shelter commissioned 99 Consulting (a private consultancy business established in 2006 by founding Shelter members Jon Eastgate and Helen Wallace) to conduct a stakeholder consultation with the sector. The terms of reference were clear: Shelter wanted feedback from its stakeholders, including the defunded peaks, Shelter branch delegates and service providers on the strengths of the organisation, policy direction and the development of positive relationships. This was also an opportunity for Shelter to provide an overview of its new funding arrangement and how these resources would be used to advocate for social housing on behalf of the sector.

.. And we thought that we could be, Queensland Shelter could be, the broad based peak providing him advice on consumers wherever they were. That annoyed all of our colleagues because we were clearly indicating that we felt that we could be a single peak when there had been four organisations representing consumers previously (Pisarski 2011 interview by the author).

Former Shelter staff member Kate Cowmeadow was of the belief that there was a “fairly irrational” view across the Queensland housing peaks that if the organisations stood together funding agreements for each would stay in place (Cowmeadow 2011 interview by the author). Pisarski considered this an incorrect assumption:

But because I had been through the same scenario in different states with different bodies I knew that ministers eventually come to the view of ‘I’m only writing one check, you work out who it’s going to or I’ll work out who it’s going to’. So we put our hand up and it annoyed everyone else but it was a strategic decision that we had to make and our Board supported it. I told all of the other bodies that, that was our position ... I am still removing the knives from my back as a result. But I think it was the right thing to do ... (Pisarski 2011 interview by the author).

Shelter continued to expand its avenues for influence and representational capacity. An enhanced branch grant program was established in order to foster work programs within

Shelter branches. Shelter was also actively trying to develop relationships with other Queensland governmental agencies including the Residential Tenancy Authority, Department of Communities and the Urban Land Development Authority – which was highlighted as an area of priority for Shelter staff and Board (99 Consulting and Queensland Shelter 2008: 7-8).

Constructively engaged but not captured⁶⁸

Following the decision made by Swarten, Shelter continued to engage constructively with the minister's office and department staff. Swarten did not necessarily agree with the advice provided, but insider status ensured that Shelter had ongoing involvement in policy discussion. As Swarten explained:

More than often, I'd say mostly, they [departmental staff] had a good relationship with Shelter and they'd run it by them before it even got to me. They would say, 'This is what Shelter's going to do and this is what Shelter thinks' and I'd get Adrian in and we'd argue about it or whatever or agree to it ... (Swarten 2013 interview by the author).

As discussed in earlier chapters of this thesis, Grant (1989) identified the possibility of interest group capture, arguing that insider groups may become prisoner groups when the pressure group is no longer a critical participant. Captured groups no longer offer alternate advice; they cannot be considered influential because they do not voice opinions that are not shared or openly espoused by decision makers. Thus the value that the pressure group can add to the policy process is minimal because they do not differ in opinion from the government on issues. It was clear from my time working within the offices of Shelter, observing staff and attending policy meetings, that the organisation was aware of the need to remain constructive. As Pisarski wrote in 2003 "Peaks are not arms of government and are most effective working in partnerships but with freedom to comment as properly recognised independent entities" (Pisarski 2003: 5).

As discussed in the methodology section of this thesis, I analysed Shelter media releases between 2004 and 2009 to determine whether the content was supportive or critical of the actions of the Beattie Labor government.

⁶⁸ Handwritten Post-It note on a Queensland's Shelter staff member's desk, 31 August 2011

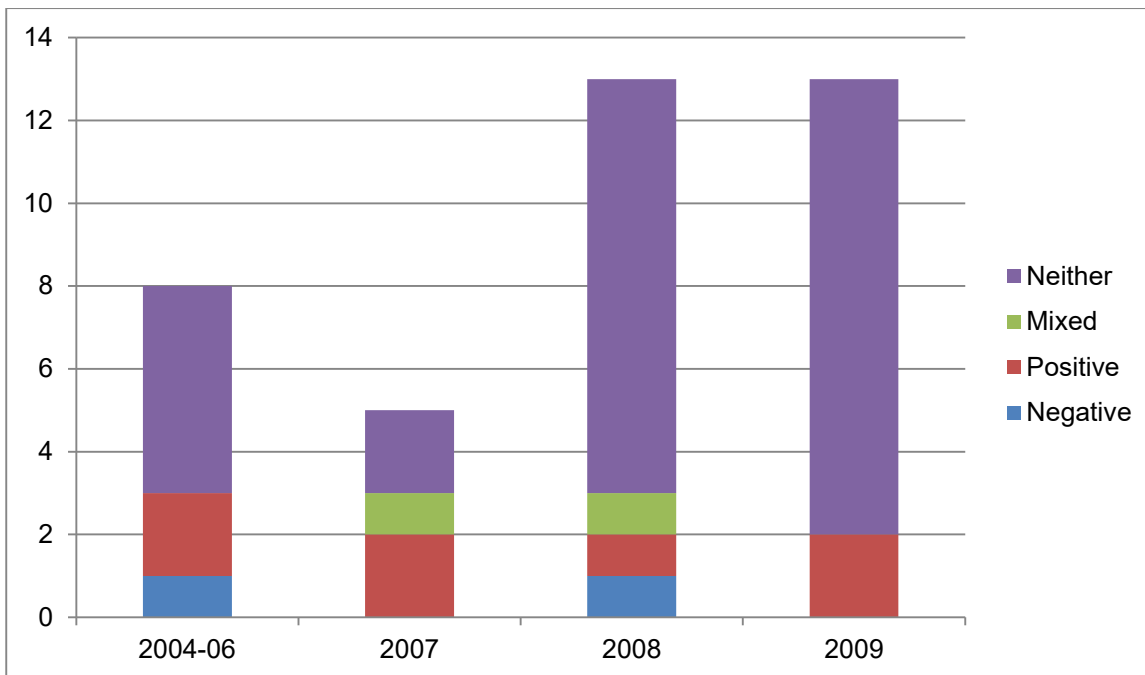


Figure 4: Content analysis: Shelter media releases 2004-09

The results of the content analysis are illustrated in figure 4. After Shelter became the solely funded housing policy peak in July 2007, the organisation had the resources to hire a Communications Officer and this combined with the extra responsibilities of an umbrella peak accounts for the increased number of media releases during this period. Shelter rarely criticised the Beattie Government in the media. There were no dramatic changes to their modus operandi following the 2007 funding decision by Schwarten. And while there was some increase in media releases which offered both praise and critical comment, the low level of criticism could be used to suggest that Shelter was captured during this period.

The interview material collated for this thesis points to a greater complexity, providing a more nuanced understanding of the different methods that insider and outsider groups use to engage constructively in policy development. As an insider group it is possible to criticise the government, but it is more productive to do this using insider tactics. Interview testimony supports the argument that Shelter retained its capacity to advocate, avoiding capture. Former Director-General of Housing, Natalie McDonald (2004-2009) recalls that while decision making power remains with the government, peaks have an important role to play in representing the views of their members:

I certainly never felt at all that, you know, we had Shelter or anyone else in our pockets, doing our bidding. I don't ever recall a time when we ever thought going into a meeting with the peaks would be a piece of cake and that we would just steam roller over the top of them. I mean we might steamroller over the top of them anyway but it

wasn't for lack of [them] not putting their views forward (McDonald 2013 interview by the author).

While Shelter continued to engage in advocacy, constructively criticising the government they did rely heavily on state government funding, bringing into question whether they were captured by resources. The charts below provide a snapshot of the financial contributions received by Shelter in 1996 and 2006. The proportion of income received by the state government was consistent across each of these time periods, as illustrated in figure 5 and 6.

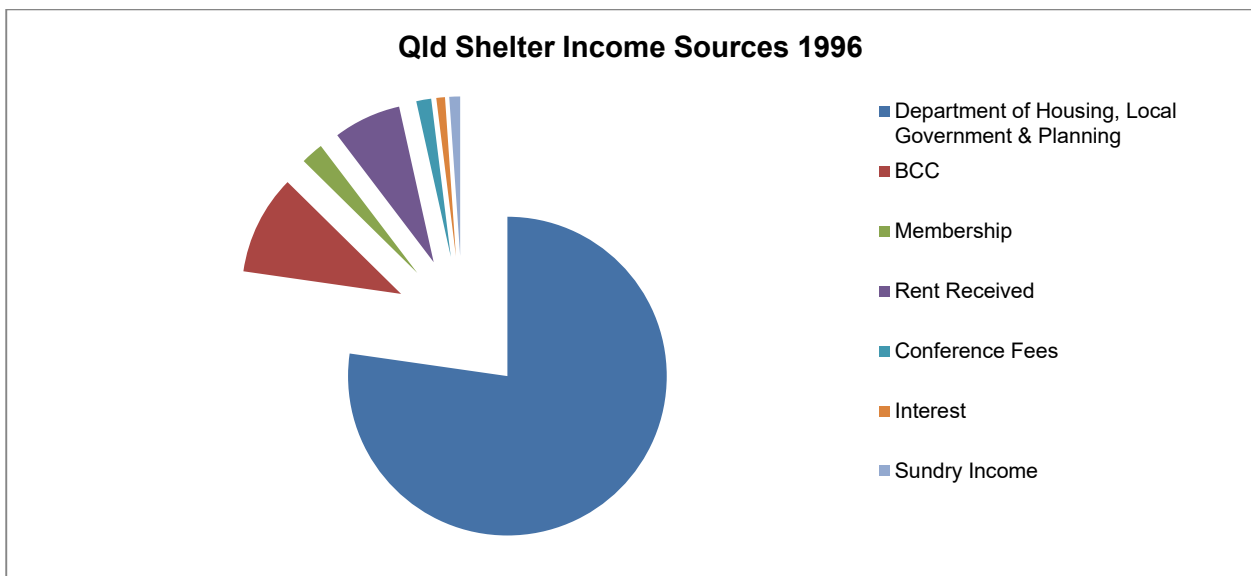


Figure 5: Annual income received by Queensland Shelter in 1996⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Total income \$318,095.77 (June 1996), Source Queensland Shelter annual report 1996.

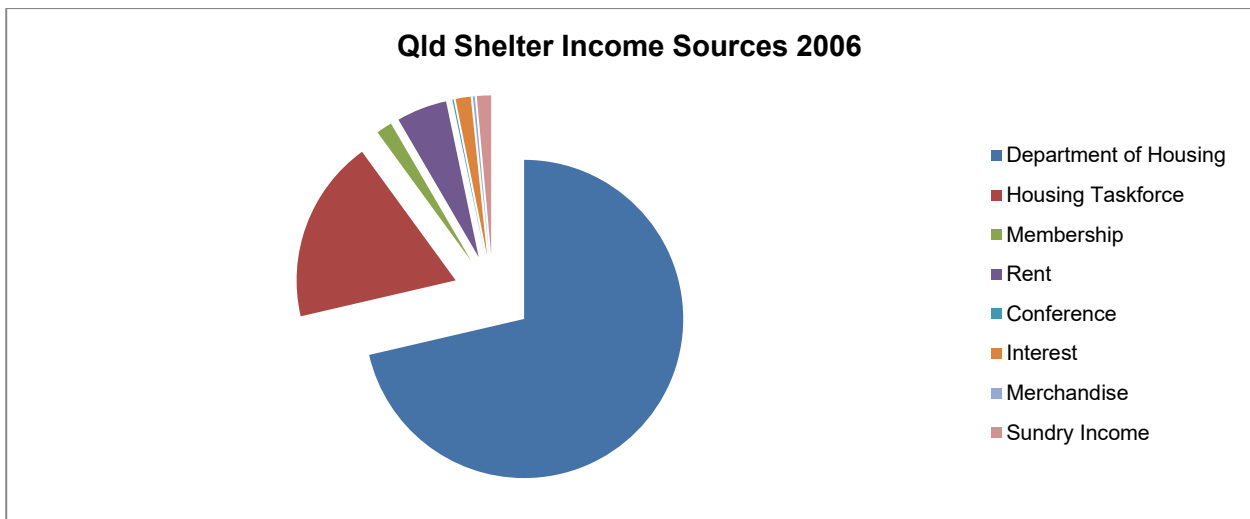


Figure 6: Annual income received by Queensland Shelter in 2006⁷⁰

While interview testimony supports the argument that Shelter retained the capacity to advocate on behalf of the sector during this period, the level of income received from the government indicates that the organisations depended on government funding.

During many of the interviews I asked former politicians, senior bureaucrats and other policy actors whether the risk of defunding was or should be a consideration by policy advocacy peaks when giving advice. None of the interviewees I spoke with thought that the relationship between funding and criticism was so direct, although some advocated that criticism needed to be framed in a way in which it would be constructive, “You still need to criticise but I think in policy terms it is always best to be constructive ... It’s not about necessarily keeping your funding safe but it’s about how you responsibly intervene in policy” (Morgan-Thomas 2013 interview by the author). Governments will continue funding peak policy groups if they are providing useful and productive policy advice. Schwarten was also clearly aware of state power with regards to funding and resourcing but also conscious of Shelter’s credibility within the community. “That was always in the back of my mind that governments can pull the rug from under them. But if it is a fairly well established organisation with some credibility in the community, that is hard to do” (Schwarten 2013 interview by the author).

A favourable political environment and the development of a productive relationship between the Housing Minister and the Executive Officer of Shelter, Adrian Pisarski, contributed to the success of the organisation in participating in many aspects of policy development. Shelter

⁷⁰ Total income \$457,467.61 (July 2006), Source Queensland Shelter annual report 2006.

was not captured during this period; rather the insider relationship enabled them to engage in meaningful and at times critical dialogue with the Minister's office. While the Minister remained in a position of authority, he regularly consulted with Shelter on a range of issues, as did bureaucrats within the Housing department. In the same year that Shelter became the solely funding social housing umbrella peak, Peter Beattie retired and Anna Bligh became the first female Premier of Queensland.

Chapter Nine:

The voice of reason: from inside to outside (2007-12)

Shelter continued to operate as an insider group during the Bligh era but the extent of its participation was impacted by several challenges – access to data, the establishment of a super department and the organisation’s expansion into federal politics. The newly elected Prime Minister Kevin Rudd showed great interest and commitment to housing affordability. This led to renewed intent in housing reform, with the implementation of the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS). Shelter were involved in this reform as the Executive Officer of Queensland Shelter Adrian Pisarski, was also the volunteer Chairperson of National Shelter. The lines between Queensland Shelter and National Shelter blurred. The second half of this chapter analyses Shelter’s role following the election of the Newman LNP Government in 2012. Shelter operated as an outsider group throughout the turmoil and uncertainty, which beleaguered many policy advocates after the 2012 election. Senior Shelter staff, though not a majority of the Board, remained optimistic about its ability to develop a productive relationship with the Newman Government, with repeated affirmation within organisational walls that they could provide a ‘voice of reason’ and much needed policy advice on social housing issues. As the Newman Government delivered on its promise to reduce government spending, both the community sector and the state bureaucracy faced upheaval.

Shelter Vice-Chairperson Peter Spearritt recalled several attempts at accessing governmental data and/or employing a statistician. The Housing Department rejected a request, by Shelter to develop its own database of housing statistics including measures of housing stress stating that the Department would supply such data, as needed. They never did (Spearritt 2012 interview by the author). There is some evidence that other areas of the Queensland government were aware of the problems and the difficulties experienced by non-state actors in accessing data. In 2010 the Queensland Governance Committee, established under the goals of the Queensland Compact initiated a project entitled *Good Practice Guide for Data and Information Sharing* (Queensland Government 2010). The aims of this guide were to “support improved data and information sharing between the

Queensland Government and the Non-profit Community Services Sector” (ProBono News 2010). This issue remains unresolved for non-state actors, although at the time of writing this frustration was overshadowed by the threat of defunding for community and not-for-profit advocacy organisations.

Lack of relevant statistics is an issue, not only for developing evidence based policy advice but also essential in influencing governments by providing policy advice that is economically viable. Despite difficulties in accessing departmental data, Shelter developed and maintained constructive relationships with a number of bureaucratic and political actors within the Bligh Government:

We have good access to the Minister’s office ... I talk to the Ministerial advisors on a pretty regular basis, whenever there is an issue, you know they will answer the phone, or get back to me very quickly ... We now have regular meeting with Treasury officials and we have even, about once or twice a year we meet with officials in the Premier’s Department as well and a couple of times a year we will meet with people in the planning department. So we have a much broader set of relationships now than just through a single government department (Pisarski 2011 interview by the author).

National Shelter

Pisarski was both the paid Executive Officer of Queensland Shelter and the Chairperson of the Executive Committee of National Shelter. For most of this time National Shelter operated without any funding from the Commonwealth government, in effect cross subsidised by Queensland Shelter. Adrian Pisarski was not the first Queensland Shelter employee to simultaneously hold the Chairperson’s role of National Shelter; Eleri Morgan-Thomas also held both positions during the 1990s.

Morgan-Thomas recalls advantages to performing both roles, not least of which the opportunity to make some comments through National Shelter that may not have been accepted if made by Queensland Shelter: “...as chair of National Shelter ... you have the capacity to use National Shelter to talk about other things that all the states are doing in a way that ... took some of the pressure off Queensland Shelter” (Morgan-Thomas 2013 interview by the author). As National Shelter chairperson, Pisarski successfully developed relationships with several federal Labor ministers. This also enabled Pisarski to be a conduit of information from the federal to the state arena. Success at this time was not only due to Pisarski’s ability to develop relationships but also to the resources afforded to Shelter staff

and board members which enabled the capacity to develop policy advice based on evidence.

The federal political environment was also extremely favourable at this time: the newly elected Labor Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd (2007-10) was committed to ensuring affordable housing. The Rudd government introduced a number of major reforms to housing policy; the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) replaced the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement (CSHA) and the Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program (SAAP). The National Rental Affordability Scheme was implemented in 2008 to address “the shortage of affordable rental housing by offering financial incentives to persons or entities such as the business sector and community organisations to build and rent dwellings to low and moderate income households at a rate that is at least 20 per cent below the market value rent” (Australian Government 2014). The aim of the NRAS was to increase the numbers of private rental stock by encouraging private investment. Pisarski argues that National Shelter was instrumental in policy development during this period:

The impact of federal policy has been alluded to within many of the policy reforms discussed; the imbalance of power between the Australian states and territories continues to grow. The power of state based groups to challenge and frame federal policy issues is limited and continues to experience constraints as the Commonwealth expands its power over the States. In the later period covered by this research, Shelter staff shifted some of the focus to policy at the national level. As Linda Apelt explained:

As a routine matter we would consult with Queensland Shelter on most things ... but I wouldn't say it was, you know, ground shaping or anything because the agenda is pretty well set and agreed federally ... all states and territories are basically driving it at their own pace ... So probably the most influence Adrian [Pisarski] would have would be as chair of National Shelter (Apelt 2012 interview by the author).

A similar sentiment was echoed by Penny Gillespie, who also spoke about the decision making authority and power of the Commonwealth and the limitations of a state based peak to advocate successfully in this arena (Gillespie 2013 interview by the author). Another former Director-General I spoke with, Natalie McDonald, argued that Pisarski was “much more interested in high order policy, much more interested in the national scene ...” (McDonald 2013 interview by the author). Certainly Shelter was aware of the role of the Commonwealth and the need to develop relationships within this level of government with input into several major Rudd policy initiatives:

We have been a part of that equation, because we have helped create the National Affordable Housing Agreement, the National Rental Affordability Scheme and the stimulus boost from the federal government and that benefits Queensland ... (Pisarski 2011 interview by the author).

As described in the opening chapters of this thesis there are inherent difficulties in measuring influence. Outsider groups that are using media tactics to pressure the government can offer observable conflict in which a clearly stated view is articulated and can be traced forward to a decision - although this account of outsider group activity is not without its limitations, making the assumption that the pressure group and decision maker are operating within a bubble and are not subject to external influences. As groups become closer to decision makers, influence in the form of advice or criticism becomes even less visible as 'pressure' is muted to persuasion. Insider groups are engaged by decision makers in formal and informal policy discussion in which they attempt to persuade governments of a course of action – often over very long periods of time, as relationships and trust develop. Ministers have a number of sources, advisors, senior bureaucrats, universities and peaks that offer advice and posit a view. Ministers are constrained by the political view of their party, the government of the day at a state and federal level and have a duty to represent their electorate. Without a close relationship to government, an advocacy group will have much less opportunity to participate in policy discussion, but influence within these discussions is difficult to measure given the multiple sources of advice received – some of which is likely to be the same or very similar.

Super department

Premier Anna Bligh appointed Karen Struthers as Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women following the retirement of Robert Schwarten, who did not contest the seat of Rockhampton in the 2009 election. Peter Spearritt observed that while Struthers had a clear understanding of community sector issues, she did not have the same political clout as former Housing and Public Works Minister Robert Schwarten:

Struthers we found in one sense easier to relate to but it was also quite obvious that she didn't have anywhere near the authority that Schwarten had [within her department] and political manoeuvre. Schwarten has a personality and was a bit more of a force to be reckoned with ... (Spearritt 2012 interview by the author).

According to Spearritt placement and seniority of the housing portfolio impacts on the framing of policy solutions and problems and the power of the minister:

Schwarten also had a lot of power because he was also Minister for Public Works and really had a close interest in big budget projects and knew about big budget projects and what sites the government owned and what they didn't (Spearritt 2012 interview by the author).

Following the 2009 election Bligh restructured the former 23 state departments into 13 departments. The [Super] Department of Communities now included Community Services, Housing, Local Government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Partnerships, Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs and Child Safety and Sport. It was the aim of the Bligh Government to improve efficiencies and break down the silos that existed in government in order to promote coordination across portfolios. The new structure, however, created challenges for Shelter in terms of communication and ensuring housing issues remained on the political agenda of the government of the day.

Communicating with decision makers was complicated, as explained by former Queensland Shelter senior policy officer Noelle Hudson:

One of the things we found with the mega department was that everything took two to five times as long ... Previously we would have gone to Penny Gillespie [senior public servant] who then would have spoken to the DG and then it would have gone to the ears of the Minister and there was not a lot of interference in between. When it became the mega department there was a layer on top of that, there was a layer in between ... the Executive Officer, to the Deputy Director-General, to the Director-General, then to the Minister, but at that point in time the Director-General actually had three to four Ministers so that made it even more complex and we were shunted to the side (Hudson 2013 interview by the author).

There was also the problem of ensuring the prioritisation of housing affordability, which was lost among competing issues and demands made to the Department of Communities:

Housing was not a squeaky wheel. Extreme need in disability and child safety completely monopolised the Minister's time and homelessness was in there as well. Housing was a quite a well-run outfit, it had all of its ducks in a row, I mean with its flaws but still when it came to it ... I had a Regional Director say to me at the time I would love to be able to spend more time with housing but my day is taken up from

7.00 in the morning to 7.00 at night with disability and with child safety ... (Hudson 2013 interview by the author).

In 2010 the Communities Department's Policy and Performance unit asked Shelter to consult with the sector with the aim of creating "a vision of what the housing assistance sector should look like in Queensland to achieve the best housing outcomes for people who need assistance and the policy development and changes that would be necessary to achieve that ..." (Queensland Shelter circa 2010). Members of the Shelter policy team conducted a literature review and established a research plan. Shelter Delegates were consulted on the scope of the project, the membership for the reference group and the overall project plan (Queensland Shelter circa 2010). To ensure regional representation Shelter organised a series of forums in Townsville, Gladstone, Toowoomba, Roma and Brisbane.

One of the key benefits of enabling a peak advocacy group to consult the sector is that Shelter members are often delivering services and see first-hand the issues that are currently facing social housing providers. Former Director-General of Housing Natalie McDonald explains how the peaks were also vital in gaining a different perspective to that of the department:

Not everybody will tell the department because the department is ultimately the decision maker in things so if someone's got a dissenting view or an alternate view then they may or may not want to air that with the person that is their landlord ... and might choose not to engage or raise issues or explore issues in a way that they might feel could threaten them. And I don't think there was ever any evidence, that I saw in the time that I was there, that the Department would take action in that regard, but it's a perception issue ... (McDonald 2013 interview by the author).

Shelter presented the Department with the Shape of Housing Assistance in Queensland (SHAQ) report. The SHAQ report made a number of recommendations to the Bligh Government, based on Shelter's research and engagement with the social housing sector, but in this chapter I focus on recommendations made regarding growth and supply of social housing stock. In this regard the report recommended that the Department of Communities (Housing & Homelessness):

Transfer 25% of stock with title to community housing providers. This should be required to be leveraged up to 20% to allow the recipient organisation's to grow their portfolio tied to the provision of affordable housing.

Facilitate and provide access to equity, land and capital funding. Potential ideas for this may include a central fund that people could access, being offered no or low interest loans and /or state owned land.

Broaden the range of housing products on offer this may include investigating home ownership pathways and shared equity schemes; additional subsidies being paid to housing providers to allow people to rent at 50% of market rent, and investigate other housing models that would suit other demographic groups who do not participate in the system fully, for example, young people (Queensland Shelter 2011b: 15).

Hudson states that the issue of stock transfer (recommended within the report) had the most impact on decision makers: "I think definitely the appetite for stock transfer has changed" (Hudson 2013 interview by the author). As Shelter was not the only voice contemplating the pros and cons of stock transfer, it is difficult to determine whether the favourable shift towards stock transfer was solely due to policy advice from Shelter. The United Kingdom had begun its stock transfer program twenty years prior, reflecting a rapid growth in housing co-operatives in the UK, and the Australian federal government had long been making noise about this direction. As Hudson iterated:

We have seen within certain approaches ... bits happen and you think that looks very familiar or at least it's in line – it's not so far out of line of what we've asked ... Whether or not it's from us ... because at the same time that we've been pushing for this [stock transfer] the COAG has been pushing for it as well ... (Hudson 2013 interview by the author).

While it is impossible to assign influence to one particular policy actor at the exclusion of others, Shelter was engaged by the key department officials and participated in policy discussion and development during this period. Shelter Operations Manager Kate Cowmeadow explained that while earlier meetings with the department "were very much about ... fulfilling our agreed work plan ... it's much more now about them assisting us ..." (Cowmeadow 2011 interview by the author) Pisarski follows on by summing up the evolution of the relationship between Shelter and housing policy decision makers:

... I think we have gone from a place where we might have made suggestions to government or demands on government about what they do, which they didn't

respond to or responded to generally negatively and thanked us politely for our advice but they weren't going to accept it ... To the point now where it's actually a genuine conversation about where are we going and how is the best way to get there (Pisarski 2011 interview by the author).

Linda Apelt took a less sanguine view of the role of Shelter during this period, arguing that the super departmental structure made it much more difficult for Shelter to access decision makers:

In recent times I haven't noticed Shelter as being anyway near as active as it was in the days of Roksana Khan. I think it has become a bit more of a comfortable bureaucracy, if you like and I don't know what its role is these days ... Part of my perspective is probably coloured by the fact that in the early days when I had a smaller realm of responsibility I was much closer and more actively engaged with bodies like Shelter. As time has gone by and bureaucracies have got bigger and housing has been part of a bigger amalgam of arrangements, it has probably become harder for these bodies to really influence right at the top (Apelt 2012 interview with the author).

In addition to the issues associated with the super department, Apelt also suggested Shelter's mandate became less clear following the decision to elevate Shelter to the policy peak. The emergence of large social housing companies following the success of the Brisbane Housing Company impacted on Apelt's view of Shelter. As Apelt argues:

And also when you get organisations like Brisbane Housing Company and all these housing companies around the place - Why do they need a Shelter? ... Because they've got expert boards of lawyers, accountants ... you name it, sitting on their boards ... So does Shelter represent the interests of the tenants? Or does it represent the interests of the providers? And I think that got a bit lost with that amalgamation process, their mandate has become a bit confusing (Apelt 2012 interview with the author).

Changing of the guard: the Newman Government

By mid-2011 the public was losing confidence in the Bligh Labor government; popular perception was that Bligh had back flipped on the previous election promise regarding asset sales and this continued to damage the government's standing (Wardill 2011). A massive health payroll computer glitch also undermined its credibility (Bligh 2015). Although Bligh had performed well in the crisis of the January 2011 Queensland floods, the Brisbane Lord

Mayor Campbell Newman was also highly regarded by the public for the way in which he and the Brisbane City Council handled the crisis.

In an unusual political move Newman resigned as Lord Mayor in April 2011, signalling his intention to run for the seat of Ashgrove in the 2012 state election. Even before the state election, Newman was installed as the leader of the impressively united LNP team. Newman won his seat and the LNP were elected by an unprecedented majority on 24 March 2012, crucially leaving only a handful of Labor members with which to form the Opposition.⁷¹ The issue of state debt and controversial asset sales had crippled the Bligh Government in the election lead up. The Newman Government sent a clear message that they would be significantly reducing state expenditure, in the campaign period and after they were elected.

Some measures saved little but spoke volumes about the newly elected government's priorities, such as the abolishment of the Queensland Literary awards. This saved the Newman Government only \$244,475 (Hurst 2012a) but conveyed the message that funding for the Arts was not a priority. Campbell Newman cleverly responded to the criticism by banning state departments and statutory bodies from buying corporate boxes at sporting venues (Wardill 2012). The saving from this directive was not made public. These early austerity measures signified the Newman Government's commitment to the reduction of state debt and contributed to an environment of insecurity regarding the continuity of current government programs. The need for fiscal cutbacks was legitimised by the *Queensland Commission of Audit* interim report which forecasted a state deficit of almost five billion dollars by 2013 (Queensland Government 2012).

In June 2012 Campbell Newman announced that Queensland had twenty thousand more public servants than it could afford. The state budget, handed down in September directed that around fourteen thousand public service jobs were to be cut. Public criticism of these job cuts played out in social media with several Facebook groups devoted to criticising the Newman Government including: Campbell Newman Shame Files⁷², Keep Campbell to Account⁷³, Keep Queensland Public Service Jobs⁷⁴, Campbell Newman Support Rural, Campbell We Do Care⁷⁵ (regarding same sex marriage) and Friends Don't Let Friends Vote

⁷¹ LNP - 78 seats, Labor - 7 seats, Katter's Australia Party - 2 seats, Independents - 2 seats

⁷² 3584 likes (as at 19 November 2013)

⁷³ 6626 likes (as at 19 November 2013)

⁷⁴ 1745 likes (as at 19 November 2013)

⁷⁵ 401 likes (as at 19 November 2013)

for Campbell Newman.⁷⁶ Keep Campbell to Account was by far the most popular, but numbers were still low, with a little over six and half thousand ‘likes.’ Membership of these Facebook sites was smaller than the turn out for street marching, which has the benefit of providing an emotional and political outlet. At one of the largest events held on 12 September 2012 an estimated eight thousand people protested outside the Queensland parliament house against the job cuts (Guest 2012).

Gag orders: funding outcomes not advocacy

The Newman Government defunded some community organisations involved in advocacy almost immediately. In May of 2012, the Queensland Association for Healthy Communities (QAHC) lost just over two and a half million dollars in state funding, which amounted to three quarters of their total budget (Hurst 2012b). The focus of QAHC was to prevent HIV/AIDS through education and provide support for members of the gay and lesbian community. Health Minister Lawrence Springborg defended this decision by stating, “the organisation had lost its way” (Springborg cited by Hurst 2012b). Springborg disapproved of the advocacy work undertaken by QAHC and according to journalist Sharona Coutts:

... slammed the group for engaging in advocacy, citing lobbying they'd done relating to the age of consent for homosexual intercourse. The group had advocated for the legal age to be brought down from 18 to 16, in line with the law governing heterosexual sex in that state (Coutts 2012).

This example generated commentary and fear from the broader social services sector on the perceived value that the Newman Government placed on policy participation from advocacy groups. In August 2012 alarm in the social sector increased when the Newman Government released a new template for agreements between the Department of Health and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs). The new agreement featured several clauses which prevented government funded NGOs in the health sector from engaging in advocacy, let alone explicit criticism. Clause 4.3 of the agreement stated that:

Where the organisation receives 50% or more of its total funding from Queensland Health and other Queensland Government agencies, the organisation must not advocate for State or Federal legislative change. The organisation must also not

⁷⁶ 1182 likes (at as 19 November 2013)

include links on their website to other organisation's websites that advocate for State or Federal legislative change. (Queensland Government circa 2013: 8)

A spokesperson for the Department of Health was reported by the Queensland media as saying, "We want to fund outcomes. The dollars that are going into health are there to provide health outcomes. If we were there to fund political campaigning we wouldn't be the health department" (Health spokesperson cited in Hurst 2012b). Shortly after the introduction of 'gag orders' in the health sector, the Newman Government also scrapped the Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service provided through the Tenants' Union of Queensland. Twenty three offices of this service, positioned around the state, had received notice that the program had only three months of funding left and after this time would be abolished. Around eighty-thousand tenants had accessed the service in the previous year, at a cost of six million dollars. Funding for the program was provided by the interest collected by the Rental Tenancies Authority,⁷⁷ a statutory authority which until the election of Newman had displayed considerable autonomy (Carr cited in Coutts 2012). The service was temporarily rescued by the federal Gillard government which provided funding for the state service until the 31 December 2013.

Flegg Ministry

In the early months of the Newman Government, the issue of public housing was high on the government's agenda. Campbell Newman appointed Dr Bruce Flegg⁷⁸ as Minister for Housing who promptly began announcing some overarching austerity measures:

Under-utilisation of current property, waiting lists, amenity, deficits of income over cost, sharing, rent policy, fixed term tenancies, maintenance cost, leveraging assets, using the not for profit sector and caravan park ownership were all in the news (Pisarski 2012).

Underutilisation of public housing gained traction in the media, as the Newman Government announced several measures to deal with this issue. Population shifts and generational change meant that a number of public dwellings housed one or two people. These people were living in homes which could accommodate much larger families. The government estimated that there were thirty thousand Queenslanders on the waiting list for public

⁷⁷ Previously known as the Rental Bond Authority, as discussed in Chapter 4.

⁷⁸ Minister for Housing and Public Works from 3 April 2012 to 14 November 2012.

housing and eighty per cent of these were single people with children (Flegg 2012). The problem was framed by the government as an issue of inequality: “We estimate there are more than 8,700 public housing properties that have two or more additional bedrooms than needed by the occupants” (Flegg 2012).

On the 13th June 2012, Queensland Minister for Housing and Public Works, Bruce Flegg announced major reforms to the social housing sector to circumvent the projected one hundred and forty million dollar deficit by 2015-16 (Flegg 2012). The reforms included:

- addressing under-occupancy of current housing stock
- changing and simplifying rent policy
- reducing administrative and maintenance costs
- introducing fixed-term tenancies
- leveraging the asset base
- creating a stronger role for non-government housing providers.

(Flegg 2012)

For the most part these were not radical reforms, most were a continuation of processes or ideas from previous Queensland governments. Although the ‘introduction’ of fixed termed tenancies caused some unrest among social housing residents and advocates, this idea had been touted by the previous Labor government.

Some proposals to deal with under-occupancy did have the makings of more radical change, for example encouraging public housing tenants from different households to share houses or apartments, but these were soon watered down. While there was some media backlash and advocacy campaigning the real nail in the coffin of these plans was administrative incapacity in the face of the difficulties of regulating the proposed change. While the Flegg Housing Ministry maintained that “It makes no sense for a single person to live in a two or three bedroom house that would be more suitable for a single parent with a child or a family of four” (Flegg 2012), another issue caused by spare bedrooms in public dwellings was that of the undeclared sub tenant in social housing. Social housing rents are charged per person, at a rate of twenty-five per cent of each person’s income; therefore undeclared tenants do not pay rent to the government, in effect giving the sitting tenant a source of extra income. The Housing Department announced an amnesty period for public housing tenants to declare any persons currently living with them. At the end of the amnesty period the government declared it would be reviewing all tenancies with the overall goal to “better match people with properties suited to their needs, and redeveloping ageing multi-bedroom

stock to provide higher density, mixed-tenant solutions” (Flegg 2012). Those who had failed to declare additional people living in the household risked “not being considered when the department reviews under-occupancy, or any transfer to a smaller property” or having to “pay back rent at 25 per cent of their household income”. It remained unclear as to how the government proposed calculating the amount of back rent to pay.

If you have undeclared household members living in the property and you do not declare them by the end of the amnesty period (27 July 2012) two things may happen:

1. Those extra household members will not be considered when the department reviews your household for under-occupancy or for any transfer to a smaller property.
2. The department may also require you to back pay rent at the rate of 25 per cent of household income.

Illustration 12: Excerpt: letter to Queensland public housing tenants

Source: Flegg 2012 (underline added by anonymous letter recipient).

The letter and the proposed reforms generated much media attention. While the government made efforts to reassure public housing tenants that their tenure with the department was secure the issue of under occupancy was a ‘sensitive’ one. The media began reporting that the government was considering forcing people to share housing:

The Durack tenant, who did not wish to be named, said she feared the consequences of allowing a “total stranger” into her three-bedroom home, where she had lived for almost 40 years and raised four sons as a single mother (Helbig 2012b).

The Tenants’ Union of Queensland was restrained in criticising the proposals but used the media to illustrate to the government some of the issues of the proposed reforms:

They are saying things like they don't understand why the government is treating them like this when they've been good tenants, looked after their properties and often upgraded them, Ms Carr said. There are people who think they're imminently going to be moved. (Penny Carr [TUQ State Wide Coordinator] cited by Fleet 2012).

Shelter was deliberately restrained in its criticisms, issuing a media response which supported aspects of the reform, “State housing peak, Shelter, welcomes the move by the State Government to address the social housing crisis” (Queensland Shelter 2012), while also hinting at the impact of these proposals, “Addressing under occupancy is not as simple as moving under occupiers out of existing properties - part of the solution is growing the amount of social housing.” And “We have a historic mismatch of dwellings compared with

current applicants, so we need a strategy to develop more appropriately sized stock". Shelter made it clear that they were available to provide advice: "We are pleased that the state government is looking for ways to better match people with properties suited to their needs, and look forward to providing advice on the range of options" (Queensland Shelter 2012).

The media comments made by Shelter on the Flegg housing department's proposals, generated criticism from members of the social housing sector. As Eastgate explained not all members of the social housing sector agreed with the strategies of Shelter:

You read his [Pisarski's] press releases in early days of the Newman Government and the way he would say 'You know we welcome this, we are concerned about this but we are really glad that they are trying to solve the problem.' And you could see that he was walking the tightrope between not wanting to put them right off side and not wanting to just say, 'everything you do is wonderful.' But a lot of people in the sector I think, just read the praise and didn't even notice the criticism (Eastgate 2013 interview by the author).

Shelter acknowledged the achievements of both the government and not-for-profit sector in developing mixed tenure solutions. During this period Shelter capitalised on the media interest in housing issues, regularly providing comment to newspapers, and on radio and television concerning the dire situation of housing affordability, both nationally and in Queensland. At one point Pisarski claimed that one couple he knew of were forced to rent a chook house, stating: "It was in a mining region where there was really nothing to rent and they were low income folks and that was about the only thing they could find ... " (Pisarski cited in Conyers 2012). While Shelter argued that supply was the root of the problem of the lack of affordable housing, the Tenants' Union of Queensland warned that the market did nothing to protect low income earners, many of whom were "too scared to 'rock the boat' for fear of retribution from landlords" (Conyers 2012).

Not all commentary supported the plight of housing tenants. One media outlet reported on the instances of public housing tenants leaving their homes vacant while they went on overseas holidays (Gills 2012) with the inference that this was somehow an abuse of the public housing system. Minister Flegg also made clear of his awareness that there were occurrences where public housing tenants were renting out rooms to mining workers (Hurst 2012) - with the implication that these mining workers could well afford to rent privately in addition to the issues associated with undeclared tenants, as described in the above paragraphs.

Despite all the talk in the media about the lack of affordable housing and the problems faced by citizens in finding a home, the Newman Government chose to announce a crackdown on 'bad tenants' always an easy target for a government that wanted to reassure its supporters that their taxes are not being wasted. On 30 May 2012 the Newman Government released data claiming that the government was losing one million dollars a fortnight on the state's social housing system. Minister Bruce Flegg began tightening the tenancy agreements. "The leases are likely to be one, three or five years in duration, depending on people's circumstances would also be tied to good behaviour and on-time rent payments, giving the Government more power to act against bad tenants" (Helbig 2012a).

After media speculation and several weeks of general unease within the public housing community Flegg consulted directly with public housing tenants regarding the issue of underutilisation. On Flegg's behalf department staff surveyed tenants. Tenants were asked to preference several options: move to a smaller dwelling, pay more rent or share their dwelling with another public housing tenant. Around twenty per cent of the 54 263 public tenants surveyed responded to the survey (Hurst 2012). Results of this consultation demonstrate that the first preference by tenants was to move to a smaller dwelling "(62 per cent)" and the second preference was to pay more rent "(30 per cent)" (Hurst 2012c). Flegg acknowledged that the third option of sharing "was not popular with respondents and will be considered only if directly requested by tenants" (Flegg 2012a). Over 60 per cent of respondents stated that sharing was their least favourite option (Hurst 2012c). In September 2012 Flegg reported on the results of the amnesty period for public housing tenants: 2 300 households had taken advantage of the amnesty (Flegg 2012a) ensuring that "The appropriate rent can now be collected" (Flegg 2012b).

This proved a short-lived 'success' for Flegg: on 14 November 2012 he resigned as Minister for Housing, stepping down to the backbench following weeks of media speculation regarding allegations of misconduct. Flegg's media advisor Graeme Hallett had made several allegations to the press regarding contact between Flegg and his son, Jonathon Flegg, who worked for professional lobbying company, Rowland Pty Ltd. State legislation requires Ministers to record all meetings and dealings with lobbyists and Hallett alleged that Flegg's records were incomplete.

The actual lobbyist register document that was tabled when asked for by members of the opposition is in fact grossly inaccurate, misleading and fails to indicate a

number of events, if you like, or contacts, or indeed, as the Premier says, recording all encounters (Hallett cited in Hurst 2012d)

Queensland Shelter had little time to develop a relationship with Flegg before his resignation and the appointment of Tim Mander as Public Works and Housing Minister in November 2012. Mander came to politics with a diverse career background. Prior to his political career he was the CEO of the Queensland Scripture Union, a National Rugby League referee and Australian Postal worker. Shelter staff remained optimistic in their capacity to provide advice and represent the social housing sector. Despite funding cuts to other community organisations and Shelter's current position as an outsider group, the organisation retained state government funding. Pisarski was clear in his vision of Shelter's continued role in working with government:

The funded role of a peak can never be taken for granted and we work hard at bringing a considered picture whilst reflecting the diversity of opinion contributing to our views ... We try hard to balance the views of tenants, both in affordable housing and those who too often don't enjoy affordability or quality, the viability of systems and providers, the scale of the issues, how markets and systems are or need to be affected, the individual outcomes for people and the general outcome of the people. I believe our real work is thinking, not just recording and reflecting (Pisarski 2012: 5).

Shelter quickly found themselves on the outside after the change of government. A change in government is a catalyst for status change, as groups need to affirm and/or develop connections with incoming governments. At this time the state bureaucracy may not be as helpful or as willing to include a formerly accepted group, as departments are impacted by portfolio reshuffling and recruitment adjustments. There is an emerging pattern in relation to party politics and Shelter's categorisation.

Table 9: Shelter status in relation to political party in power

Categorisation of Shelter	Outsider (1987-1989)	Insider (1989-1996)	Peripheral insider (1996-1998)	Insider (1998- 2012)	Outsider (2012)
Party in Power	National Party	Australian Labor Party	National Party	Australian Labor Party	Liberal National Party

Eastgate puts this down to ideological considerations:

It is very easy in those early days to kind of misstep ... A conservative government will look at a social organisation like Shelter and will automatically assume, probably correctly, that it is more inclined to the Labor side of politics even though it is not politically aligned and so they will be distrustful. Shelter had a very close relationship with the Labor government which they worked hard to build up and that had the potential to back fire. It didn't as it turned out, because they were able to get in very early and demonstrate to the new guys [Newman Government] that they weren't going to be partisan (Eastgate 2013 interview by the author).

Eastgate suggests that distrust by conservative governments can be overcome and it is possible that if the Borbidge government had not been so short-lived Shelter might have achieved an insider relationship with the Watson Ministry. It is difficult to make any concrete assertions based on the time period – in the 25 year period covered in this thesis the conservative government held power for only six of these years.

Conclusion

This thesis contributes to the limited body of research into the study of Australian interest groups, analysing changes between Queensland Shelter and successive Queensland governments over a twenty-five year period (1987-2012). A theoretical contribution is made by revising Wyn Grant's insider typology (1989) in light of the governance shift. In this concluding chapter I demonstrate the usefulness of the revised insider typology in understanding the changing relationship between Shelter and the housing ministry of the day. The research illustrates how the organisation's participation in the development of policy has varied despite the continuation of funding by successive state housing ministries since the early 1990s. At times Shelter has worked as an insider, at others it has been shut out of any prospect of influencing government policy.

Consultation by the Queensland government has become routine. Consultative processes are used by governments to gather information and knowledge, seek evidence for change or stability and/or to deflect anticipated criticism. Groups that work as insiders contribute across many stages of policy development, informing the reform, implementation and evaluation of public policy. In contrast those who work on the outside or on the periphery have a much more limited role in policy development. While the views of these groups may be used to legitimise government decision making, they are less likely to participate in all stages of policy development.

Over the last four decades the identity, structure and purpose of interest groups in Queensland has shifted. Adversarial relationships characterised by public protest and pressure for change, have often been replaced by public consultation, policy networks and requests for comment on government- proposed policy reform. 'Pressure group' has largely faded from the vernacular, replaced with the more benign 'interest group' as governments have become more inclusive. An appetite for evidence-based policy has contributed to the inclusion of non-state actors in policy discussion, as has the increasing reliance on the community sector to deliver social goods and services, albeit often with state or federal government funding.

Shelter's role in public policy development has fluctuated over its history. This research has demonstrated that this role can be better understood by examining the relationship between Shelter and the housing ministry of the day. These historical changes are summarised in the table below:

Table 10: Queensland Shelter activity in Queensland (1980s-2000s)

Queensland Era	Engagement Strategy (encouraged by Queensland state government)	Government support for Queensland Shelter	Characteristic of Shelter activity within this period
1980s	Lobbying, with increasing sophistication, some advocacy	Ad hoc – limited grant funding, if any. Often funds primarily sourced from group membership.	Grass roots: local/community based
1990s	Advocacy	Contract funding	Expansion, sector representation strengthened
2000s	Working in partnership; the Board becomes more conventionally stakeholder driven	Development of Shelter as a peak, increased government funding	Peak organisations, with gradually weakened links to membership base

In Grant's typology an insider group is one which has access to government. The typology is inadequate in light of the governance shift because interest groups can readily involve themselves in public consultation: access to government is now more open than during the era in which the typology was developed. In the revised typology put forth in this thesis, insider (or outsider) status is derived from examining participation across the stages of policy development – rather than simply a reflection of access to decision makers. An organisation that participates in most stages of policy development is an insider, while those that are involved in routine consultations are peripheral insiders. Outsiders are those groups that work from outside of the process, relying on outsider strategies, including media campaigns and public protests. Table 11 illustrates the synthesis of the key literature reviewed for this research: Grant's typology (1989), stages of policy development (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2007) and levels of engagement (Queensland Government 2011a). The revised typology provides a framework for analysing participation in the stages of policy

development and therefore categorising the relationship between the Housing Ministry and Shelter.

Table 11: Revised interest group typology

Stages of policy development ⁷⁹	Revised interest group typology ⁸⁰			
	Protest level (outsider)	Consultation level (peripheral insider)	Relational level (insider or 'prisoner')	Decision making level
Identifying issues				
Consultation				
Policy instruments				
Policy analysis				
Implementation				
Evaluation				
Decision				
Coordination				
Mode of Engagement	Informed			
		Consulted		
			Participate	
	Mode of engagement ⁸¹			

There is an assumption that groups at the relational level (insiders) have increased capacity to influence policy direction. This is because they are involved in policy discussion throughout many of the stages of policy development. These groups may also be asked to perform evaluations, assist in implementation and consult with stakeholders. 'Prisoner' groups may also be engaged to work across many stages of the policy development process, but their capacity to influence is curtailed because they are captured. 'Captured' groups are rarely able to provide critical advice, unless a government is under siege and feels obliged to respond to an issue or placate an angry public. Captured groups are constrained by resource dependency in combination with political will, and in addition because their ideas and the government of the day become too akin. I now outline how the revised typology was used to further an understanding of the role of Shelter in the development of housing policy in Queensland.

Outsider

Having established that Grant's original typology is inadequate to describe interest group activity, following the governance shift, I note here that Queensland Shelter was established

⁷⁹ (Original source: Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2007).

⁸⁰ (Original source: Grant 1989)

⁸¹ (Original source: Queensland Government 2011a)

during a time in which access to the Queensland government was highly restricted. Grant's typology is adequate for categorising Shelter as an outsider group in the early years of its establishment (1987-1989). My revised typology, however, also works to categorise Shelter as an outsider.

Without access or acceptance by decision makers, Shelter was shut out of political discussion and resorted to using outsider strategies – contacting the media and publicly campaigning for change. A campaign led by the Tenants' Union of Queensland with support from Shelter placed pressure on the Queensland government to establish the Rental Bond Authority, which eventually opened its doors in 1989. It is not clear from the research whether the Government choose to establish such an authority because of the pressure from the campaign or whether this was a belated catch up due to the establishment of bond authorities in other states. More important, in terms of the impact of outsider strategies employed by Shelter during this period, is the successful campaign which demanded the inclusion of a tenants' spokesperson on the inaugural board of the Rental Bond Authority. Interview testimony, however, collated as part of this research indicates that the capacity to influence on the board was limited. Had Shelter been an insider group at this time, it is hypothesised that the impact on the Board would have been greater, owing to a legitimate working relationship with the government of the day.

Peripheral insider

Following the election of the Goss Labor Government, policy making in Queensland became much more open to non-state actors. The Goss government had a willingness to include community organisations – both an ideological preference and because of a genuine need for policy advice. Shelter became an insider group. Pre-existing connections between Shelter and members of the Labor Party while they were in Opposition contributed to the inclusion of Shelter in policy discussion, as did the view that Shelter was a legitimate source of policy advice. In 1991, the capacity of Shelter to provide advice was strengthened by the Goss Government which provided funding to Shelter for two full-time workers as well as money to run the first state-wide Shelter conference.

While Shelter is categorised as an insider group during the Goss era (1989-96), a number of factors impacted on the opportunity for Shelter to work across the stages of policy development. Shelter energies were stretched between establishing an organisation which would enable representation of regional Queensland, creating a policy platform and responding to the demands of the Goss Government, which initially pursued policy advice

on a range of issues. During this period, Minister for Housing, Tom Burns, sought out Shelter, either visiting Shelter meetings himself or instructing senior public servants to attend meetings to gain insight into social housing issues. Despite receiving funding from the government, Shelter was under-resourced and the increased demand for policy advice from elected housing officials placed pressure on the organisation as it continued to develop.

While Minister Burns was open to working with Shelter there was an uneasy relationship between Shelter and the bureaucracy during the Goss era. A limitation of the revised typology and its use in this thesis research is that it does not take into account relationships with other stakeholders. The use of the revised typology to understand the relationship between the Ministry and Shelter, enables an examination of the role that Burns (and his Labor Party successor Terry Mackenroth) expected Shelter to play in the development of public policy. This study concentrated on this relationship, however the broader political context such as the tension between Shelter and the housing bureaucracy, which was noted at this time, is an important factor in Shelter's capacity to participate in the development of policy. The narrative method of inquiry used within this research was useful in exploring the wider context.

In 1996 there was an unexpected return to conservative government in Queensland. Shelter shifted to a peripheral insider, consulted and informed but no longer actively participating in policy. The Borbidge government (1996-98) remained prepared to listen to non-state organisations. An example of this commitment was the Priority Housing Committee, appointed by the housing minister, David Watson as an attempt to gain a broader understanding into the issues of homelessness by including non-state policy practitioners on the committee. Shelter was not a member of this committee, perhaps because it was thought to be too closely aligned to the Labor Party.

Although Shelter is categorised as a peripheral insider during this period, it continued to receive funding, at a slight increase compared with the former government. Both Queensland Housing Ministers of this era, Ray Connor and later David Watson, were open to hearing Shelter's views on issues but beyond these somewhat routine and tokenistic meetings, Shelter participation was minimal. This is not to suggest that Shelter was inactive during this period, as former Shelter Coordinator, Roksana Khan explained during her interview for this research, this period was used to develop Shelter's policy platform (Khan 2013 interview by author).

Insider group

The Australian Labor Party returned to power in Queensland in 1998, led by Peter Beattie and after he retired from politics, Anna Bligh. Shelter operated as an insider during both the Beattie and Bligh eras – engaged by both political and bureaucratic actors within the state housing ministry to provide advice on most stages of social housing policy development. As former housing minister, Robert Schwarten, stated in his interview for this research, “I sort of wouldn’t get down a path to make up my mind mostly without talking to Shelter first” (Shelter 2013 interview by the author).

While the revised typology proposed in this thesis provides a framework for examining the relationship between Shelter and the housing ministry, it does not offer any explanation as to why Shelter was able to operate as an insider. Three themes emerged during this research in relation to government acceptance: willingness of the state housing ministry to engage with Shelter, organisational capacity of the organisation to offer advice and the broader political context.

Non-state actors are able to participate in policy networks when they have the necessary resources. It is therefore argued that governments are willing to work with non-state actors on policy when those actors have the capacity to bring something to the table, as Rhodes (1997) writes, “Each deploys its resources, whether constitutional-legal, organizational (sic), financial, political or informational, to maximize influence over outcomes, while trying to avoid becoming dependent on the other ‘players’” (Rhodes 1997: 37).

There are challenges in applying this line of thinking to the community sector (Rhodes 1997). While big business and other professional groups may have the means to develop the capacity to participate in decision making independent of government, many organisations in the community sector depend on government for their core funding. Without some acceptance by government, funding is unlikely, yet funding enables groups to develop many of the resources required for acceptance (and increases their chances of additional funding). This creates a circle of dependence, testing the ability of such organisations to openly disagree with government policy.

Government rhetoric suggests that modern governments are willing to consult widely, yet some groups are privileged over others, provided funding to consult, advocate and engage in research. Traditionally, Australian governments funded social peaks to represent the views of minorities but representation alone is no longer enough to justify state funding;

modern peaks must also provide policy solutions which are based on a sophisticated understanding of the issues. In order to receive funding and acceptance by the government an interest group must be able to demonstrate its worth, by offering well considered policy advice. Developing sophisticated policy solutions requires monetary resources, which Shelter invariably sourced from government. Social advocacy groups face an issue when it comes to resourcing. While they are advocating on behalf of social housing tenants and social housing providers, there are issues associated with getting the governing party of the day to continue funding.

From around the mid-1990s onwards Shelter was required to be both reactive and proactive. On one hand they were approached to provide advice by acting as a sounding board for policy ideas while also required to develop sophisticated analysis of policy issues and solutions. Several people I interviewed for this project stated that governments do not provide funding for groups so that they can provide 'policy demands' but instead wanted solution- focussed policy advice. As former Executive Officer Adrian Pisarski told me: "Because what they [government] wanted was an organisation that was capable of giving them nuanced, sophisticated, reasoned, evidenced- based advice" (Pisarski 2011 interview by the author). Underpinning this way of thinking is the assumption that governments do not need to be told of the problems as they are fully informed on the policy issues. But policy issues and problems, like all aspects of policy development, are in a constant state of flux. An organisation, such as Shelter, is well placed to develop a nuanced understanding of policy problems as they emerge. There are several examples provided within this thesis where the Ministry and/or the bureaucracy used non-state actors as a sounding board during the development of policy, indicating that Shelter was in a good position to appreciate the impacts and implications of emerging policy. In another telling response, former Director-General Natalie McDonald described the usefulness of Shelter:

And I think it certainly made my job - I was going to say - easier is not the right word because it sometimes made it a lot harder. As someone committed to good public policy which I am ... I felt much more comforted by having a group like Shelter, there to talk to, to consult, to be very confident that they would raise issues with me when they felt that something wasn't going right ... And I felt that public policy was really well served by having that group (McDonald 2013 interview by the author).

Shelter demonstrated the willingness and capability to represent the concerns of current and prospective social housing tenants, during a time when the waiting lists were getting longer

and longer. The branch structure implemented in the early 1990s was an important characterisation of the organisation which enabled Shelter to claim broad representation of the state, not just the south-east pocket. The ability of a peak to represent the interest of its sector is highly valued by governments.

Another issue closely associated with both acceptance by governments and a peak's capacity to represent a sector is the organisation's relationships with other political players. These broader political contexts are important considerations; in order to participate in and influence public decision making, successful advocacy groups will influence across a range of political actors, both government and non-government. Following the funding of Shelter as the sole peak, with the addition of paid staff and new premises the capacity of Shelter grew, enabling Shelter to develop relationships with other state and federal departments. An opportunity arose following the 2007 election of the Labor federal government led by Kevin Rudd, who ensured that affordable housing was high on the political agenda during his first spell as Prime Minister of Australia.

The issue of capture

While Grant (1989) argued that insider groups run the risk of becoming captured due to a shared ideology, Maloney et al (1994) posited that this was more likely a result of capture through resources. During the Bligh and Beattie eras Shelter relied on government funding and resources, but as these governments were committed to receiving advice Shelter remained in a position to engage constructively. The Newman Government, elected in 2012, took a very different view of the role of funded advocacy groups, treating almost all of those in the welfare sector with suspicion.

The impact of a favourable political environment on the ability (and opportunity) for Shelter to work as an insider group cannot be overemphasised. The capacity of Shelter to provide policy advice did not immediately cease when the Newman Government was elected, yet the organisation was immediately shut out from policy discussion. During this period Shelter experienced great difficulty in engaging the housing ministry. Despite the capacity of Shelter to provide advice and policy solutions to the newly elected government, the Newman Government was not open to or seeking advice at this stage.

Capture was demonstrated when the Newman Government decided it no longer wanted to fund Shelter for advocacy and policy work but instead funded the organisation to provide training and capacity development to the community housing sector – briefly discussed in

the following postscript. To remain autonomous interest groups need to generate funding from a variety of sources to ensure sustainability. This is a difficult proposition. Individual staff members are dependent on government funding for their own livelihood. Further research is needed to develop and evaluate sustainable funding models for non-profit advocacy organisations. Do they always have to remain 'lean and mean' to survive for instance, largely relying on volunteers and in some areas on private philanthropy?

With the benefit of hindsight it is possible that Shelter could have avoided capture by developing other sources of funding. But would Shelter have been brought into the fold if it had said 'no' to government funding? Would it have been allowed to participate in policy discussion across many of the stages of policy development if, as an organisation, it had avoided becoming a state sanctioned peak advocacy group? Further research into the experiences and histories of other Queensland based peaks is required in order to better understand the role of non-profit organisations in the development of public policy.

At the end of 2013 the Queensland Government announced a new purpose for Shelter. Will new grassroots social housing organisations emerge in Queensland to replace Queensland Shelter? It is possible that one or more of the housing peaks defunded during the Beattie era will take up some of the work, previously undertaken by Shelter.

Postscript: Capture

Shelter's direction shifted dramatically as I was finalising the writing of this thesis. In October of 2013 Housing Minister Tim Mander attended Shelter's Annual General meeting and announced that Shelter had signed a three year funding agreement to "move into its new and exciting role of supporting the community housing sector in readiness for the National Regulatory System (NRS)⁸² at the end of 2014 and the Queensland Government's 2020 Housing Strategy" (Mander cited in Shelter 2014⁸³). Shelter would no longer receive funding for advocacy work, but from this point on was funded to develop the capacity of the community housing sector. A key goal during this initial three year funding period was to ensure that community housing organisations were able to work within the guidelines of new national regulations. In the vernacular of the pressure group typology, Shelter was captured by the state government: funded to provide training and capacity development not advocacy.

Prior to the announcement of the change of direction and rationale Shelter was experiencing a great deal of structural change. The majority of the Board members, several of them serving for some years had indicated that they would not be nominating for re-election. Executive Officer, Adrian Pisarski had taken six months long service leave and until his expected return, former senior housing public servant Penny Gillespie was acting in his place. Shelter was in the process of developing a relationship with Tim Mander as the Newman Government continued to announce program cuts and redundancies within the public service.

With around 98% of Shelter's income sourced from the state government (Spearritt 2012 interview by the author) the Board could either choose to accept the new funding agreement or close down the organisation. Closing down the organisation would have avoided capture, and at the same time sent a political message, a somewhat risky proposition within the political context with similar organisations closing and messages falling on deaf ears.

⁸² Formally known as the National Regulatory System for Community Housing Providers (NRSCH).

⁸³ Since removed from Shelter's website.

Shelter communicated its new purpose to its membership:

We were delighted when our guest speaker at the AGM, Minister Tim Mander, announced three year funding for Q Shelter in the new and exciting role of supporting the community housing sector to build capacity.

We believe this new funded role will contribute significantly to the cause of safe, secure affordable and accessible housing in Queensland. We are mindful of the importance of staying closely in touch with our membership while we navigate the changes involved in moving into our new activities ... (Queensland Shelter 2013a).

At the time of writing, the role for Shelter members is unclear. Previously members and delegates were an important avenue for developing Shelter's policies and work plan agreements. The scope of Shelter's role has narrowed considerably and within the newly imposed responsibilities the role for members with a democratically elected board, is uncertain.

From the government's point of view, Shelter was well structured (and connected) to provide training and capacity development throughout the state, albeit with the requirement of new staff. Policy, research and advocacy skills were no longer needed. Skills in property and asset management, education and sector development were required in order to develop the capacity of the community housing sector. Towards the end of 2013 policy and research staff were offered redundancies and the Board undertook a recruitment process in order to appoint staff with skills in training and business development.

In December of 2013 Shelter held the first training session:

The session we are offering will provide you with essential information about registration and is targeted to boards, committees of management and senior staff. The session will include presentations from Q Shelter and the Office of the Registrar. Resources will be available to assist your organisation with decision making about registration and critical steps in this process.

The session will be an opportunity to ask questions and for Q Shelter to better understand your learning and development needs as an organisation so that we can target our services to meet your needs and those of the sector more broadly.

The NRSCH involves many responsibilities in the processes of application and ongoing compliance. Q Shelter is committed to assisting the sector in this process

and to working with you to support the best standards of community housing provision.

(Queensland Shelter 2013b).

Following this decision by the Newman Government little was left of the existing Queensland Shelter, other than its name. Shelter was completely captured, no longer able to advocate on behalf of the social housing sector. With the majority of its funding sourced through the state government, decision makers were able to dictate a new role for Shelter: a role that no longer involved participating in the development of social housing policy, or interrogating government policies and the fate of the most vulnerable people in the housing market. By September of 2014, Shelter was rebranded with a new logo and tagline. The former logo which included the statement, "Housing is a Human Right" was replaced with the somewhat lacklustre "Housing Matters".

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Appendix A: Interviews conducted by the author

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Anonymous (B). Interview by the author. Audio recording. Brisbane, 26 March 2013.

Anonymous (C). Interview by the author. Audio recording. Brisbane, 23 July 2013.

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Pisarski, Adrian. Executive Officer of Queensland Shelter (2002-2013). Brisbane, July 2011.

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Spearritt, Peter. Vice-Chairperson Queensland Shelter Board. Brisbane, 28 March 2012.

Watson, Hon. David. Minister for Housing (1997-1998). Brisbane 13 September 2011.

Watson, Sally. Tenant's Union of Queensland. Telephone interview, 19 July 2012

Wellington, Hon. Peter. Independent Member for Nicklin (1998-) Nambour, 24 February 2012

Appendix B: Queensland housing portfolios since 1968-2010⁸⁴

1st Bjelke-Petersen Ministry, 8 August 1968 to 29 May 1969

Minister for Works and Housing
Allen Hodges

2nd Bjelke-Petersen Ministry, 29 May 1969 to 20 June 1972

Minister for Works and Housing
Allen Hodges

3rd Bjelke-Petersen Ministry, 20 June 1972 to 23 December 1974

Minister for Works and Housing
Allen Hodges

4th Bjelke-Petersen Ministry, 23 December 1974 to 16 December 1977

Minister for Works and Housing
Allen Hodges (until 25 March 1975)

Minister for Works and Housing
Norman Lee (from 25 March 1975)

5th Bjelke-Petersen Ministry, 16 December 1977 to 23 December 1980

Minister for Works and Housing
Claude Wharton

6th Bjelke-Petersen Ministry, 23 December 1980 to 18 August 1983

Minister for Works and Housing
Claude Wharton

7th Bjelke-Petersen Ministry, 18 August 1983 to 7 November 1983

Minister for Works and Housing
Claude Wharton

8th Bjelke-Petersen Ministry, 7 November 1983 to 1 December 1986

Minister for Works and Housing
Claude Wharton

9th Bjelke-Petersen Ministry, 1 December 1986 to 1 December 1987

Minister for Works and Housing
Ivan Gibbs (to 25 November 1987)

Minster for Works, Housing and Industry
Ivan Gibbs (to 25 November 1987)

Interim Ahern/Gunn Ministry 1 December 1987 to 9 December 1987

Minister for Works, Housing and Industry
William Gunn

⁸⁴ The style of this list is based on the list of Federal Housing Ministers Troy (2012) included in his book *Accommodating Australians*. The content used in this list is provided by the Queensland Parliamentary library.

1st Ahern Ministry 9 December 1987 to 19 January 1989

Minister for Family Services and Welfare Housing
Peter McKechnie

2nd Ahern Ministry 19 January 1989 to 25 September 1989

Minister for Public Works, Housing and Main Roads.
William Gunn (also Deputy Premier)

Cooper Ministry 25 September 1989 to 7 December 1989

Minister for Works and Housing
James Randell

1st Goss Ministry 7 December 1989 to 24 September 1992

Minister for Housing and Local Government
Tom Burns (also Deputy Premier)

2nd Goss Ministry 24 September 1992 to 31 July 1995

Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning
Terence Mackenroth (to 16 December 1994)

Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Rural Communities
Terence Mackenroth (from 16 December 1994)

3rd Goss Ministry, 31 July 1995 to 19 February 1996

Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Rural Communities
Terence Mackenroth

Interim Borbidge/ Sheldon, Ministry 19 February to 26 February 1996

Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning
Joan Sheldon

1st Borbidge Ministry, 26 February 1996 to 26 June 1998

Minister for Public Works and Housing
Raymond Connor (to 28 April 1997)

Minister for Public Works and Housing
David Watson (from 28 April 1997)

Interim Beattie Ministry, 26 to 29 June 1998

Minister for Public Works and Housing
Peter Beattie

1st Beattie Ministry, 29 June 1998 to 16 December 1999

Minister for Public Works and Housing
Robert Schwarten

2nd Beattie Ministry, 16 December 1999 to 30 November 2000

Minister for Public Works and

Minister for Housing
Robert Swarten

3rd Beattie Ministry, 30 November 2000 to 22 February 2001

Minister for Public Works and
Minister for Housing
Robert Swarten

4th Beattie Ministry, 22 February 2001 to 12 February 2004

Minister for Public Works and
Minister for Housing
Robert Swarten

5th Beattie Ministry, 12 February 2004 to 28 July 2005

Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing
Robert Swarten

6th Beattie Ministry, 28 July 2005 to 2 February 2006

Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing
Robert Swarten

7th Beattie Ministry, 2 February 2006 to 13 September 2006

Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing
Robert Swarten

8th Beattie Ministry, 13 September 2006 - 13 September 2007

Minister for Public Works and Housing
Robert Swarten (until 12 October 2006)
Minister for Public Works and Housing and Information and Communication Technology
Robert Swarten (from 12 October 2006)

1st Bligh Ministry, 13 September 2007 - 26 March 2009

Minister for Public Works and Housing and
Information and Communication Technology
Robert Swarten

2nd Bligh Ministry, 26 March 2009 – 21 February 2011

Minister for Community Services and Housing and
Minister for Women
Karen Struthers

3rd Bligh Ministry, 21 February 2011 – 26 March 2012

Minister for Community Services
Karen Struthers

Newman Government⁸⁵

Minister for Housing and Public Works
Bruce Flegg
(3 April 2012 – 14 Nov 2012)

Timothy (Tim) Mander
Minister for Housing and Public Works:
(19 Nov 2012 – 14 February 2015)

⁸⁵ The Parliamentary Library will compile information for inclusion in the Queensland Parliamentary Record for the 54th Parliament later in the year and is unfortunately not yet available (Queensland Parliamentary Library 2015).