

Version Control

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Section 4— Working with the Community**

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Table of Contents

4.1	Tenants Access to Support.....	3
4.1.1	Information on Support Agencies.....	3
4.1.2	Providing Information.....	3
4.1.3	Assisting Tenants to gain Support	3
4.1.4	Resource List of Support Services	4
4.1.5	Service Agreements	4
4.1.6	Support Partner Feedback.....	4
4.1.7	Monitoring	4
4.2	Building Community Capacity.....	5
4.2.1	Development in the housing sector.....	5
4.2.2	Building Stakeholder Relationships.....	5
4.2.3	Contribution to the social housing debate.....	5
4.2.4	Contribution to the local community	6
4.2.5	Informing the local community	6
4.2.6	Donations & Sponsorships.....	6
4.2.7	Planning	6
4.2.8	Integration of service	6
4.2.9	Joint Ventures	7
4.2.10	Monitoring	7

4.1 Tenants Access to Support

4.1.1 Information on Support Agencies

Pacific Link identifies and establishes good working relationships with a range of community and government agencies that provide support services for tenants. We build partnerships to assist tenants with a range of needs to have the appropriate support systems to enable them to maintain their tenancies and live with independence

We gather and provide information on:

- Support mechanisms and services for tenants, including brochures, promoting open days, events and workshops.
- Housing opportunities for a range of clients with special needs, options for housing and emergencies.

4.1.2 Providing Information

Pacific Link makes sure that all relevant community agencies, real estate agents and government agencies are well informed as to the property and tenancy services that the organisation provides. Information will be provided via our housing officers, at our reception, via our tenant newsletter and on our website on:

- Housing Eligibility criteria
- Housing Pathways Application forms and tenant handbook
- Annual report
- Governance, registration and accreditation information
- Factsheet for new real estate agents and property owners
- Support service partner contact information.

4.1.3 Assisting Tenants to gain Support

Pacific Link makes every effort to form close working relationships with support agencies and tenancy advocacy providers to enable tenants to maintain a tenancy and live with independence.

Pacific Link employs suitably qualified employees to co-ordinate support services and maintain support partner relationships. These employees work within the Clinical Service Co-ordinator (CSC) team. The role of the CSC team will include:

- assisting tenants to access the necessary services by offering referral links should the tenant agree to support or assistance. Housing Managers will use the “Request for Support Services Information Form” to arrange for the CSC team to forward relevant information to tenants. Housing Managers will complete the “Tenant Support Referral Questionnaire” to provide information for arranging support referrals.
 - identifying any child welfare or protection issues.
 - ensuring tenants’ informed consent is obtained prior to sharing information with other service providers and maintaining tenant privacy.
 - monitoring the ongoing provision of support services, particularly where tenant support contracts are in place with Support Service Partners.
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- updating tenant support arrangements data on the tenancy database so that all employees involved with tenants are aware of current status.
- seeking feedback from tenants on the quality, timeliness and relevance of support provided by Support Service Partners,
- for tenants with high support needs, liaise with housing, maintenance and finance employees to ensure particular sensitivity is maintained where rent arrears, inspection access and breach of tenancy issues arise.

4.1.4 Resource List of Support Services

The resource list of local support services in the areas that we operate is the responsibility of the CSC team and will be updated regularly to ensure contact details and information on services is up to date.

The CSC team keeps Housing Managers updated with new developments in support services.

Details of Support Service Partners are published on our website and annual report.

4.1.5 Service Agreements

All agencies in partnership with Pacific Link – Support Service Partners - sign a Service Level Agreement outlining the roles and responsibilities of both parties to the agreement and stating the terms and conditions pertaining to the agreement. All Service Level Agreements have a common two year term. The standard terms and specifics of the agreement are reviewed at every renewal with the Support Service Partner.

4.1.6 Support Partner Feedback

Pacific Link seeks feedback regularly from Support Service Partners on the referral process with other agencies to gauge effectiveness of our services and the relationship. We conduct regular one-on-one meetings with Support Service Partners to discuss operational aspects of partnerships. We also hold group meetings and forums to gain information for continuous improvement and encourage networking between support agencies. We aim to hold three group meetings with support partners every year.

To complement responses to written surveys we will conduct regular meetings between the CSC team and the Support Service Partner.

4.1.7 Monitoring

The CSC team provides quarterly reports to the Board on support service activities and the success or otherwise of partnerships. Feedback from Support Service Partners will be monitored by the CEO and Board.

4.2 Building Community Capacity

4.2.1 Development in the housing sector

Pacific Link keeps itself informed of developments within the community housing sector by:

- Membership of various peak industry groups and other relevant organisations.
- Maintaining regular contact and building strong relationships with relevant statutory funding bodies to discuss our strategic plan, policy interpretation, funding agreements and programs and housing stock allocations.
- Regular contact with community housing policymakers and representatives of local, state and federal government
- Regular contact with other community housing providers through CEO forums and manager networks.
- Subscriptions to newsletters and bulletins.
- Accessing information regarding international trends in social housing.
- Attending all relevant conferences, forums and meetings, seminars and training workshops.

4.2.2 Building Stakeholder Relationships

Pacific Link aims to grow the public awareness of the community housing sector and the statutory funding body's role and to generate positive recognition from clients and stakeholders.

To achieve this objective Pacific Link has an active communications plan, overseen by the Board, that includes the following policies:

- We retain a professional, specialist communications and public relations firm to assist with implementation of the plan.
- We have regular contact with community housing sector participants as outlined above.
- We announce positive outcomes from our programs in the local media and to tenants via our Link Newsletter and tenant newsletters.
- We plan for reputational risks that may arise.
- We participate in state and local government committees and meetings with agencies that have objectives relevant to our strategic plan and tenant needs.
- We provide information to local real estate agents and landlords on our services.
- We advertise in local newspapers and our website inviting private landlords to provide appropriate housing for us to manage.
- We develop relationships with local property developers, councils and landowners through our Business Development Manager to identify development opportunities for affordable housing stock.

4.2.3 Contribution to the social housing debate

Pacific Link ensures it has a presence at meetings, forums, and workshop discussions and to involve itself in debates concerning housing issues to include policy, new strategies, systems, methodology and directions.

The Board oversees responses to invitations to participate in pilot programs and initiatives, in presenting submissions and papers to provide input into the debate.

From time to time the Board will commission academic research into the demographics of our operational locations and into measuring outcomes from new programs that we develop.

4.2.4 Contribution to the local community¹

Pacific Link, under the direction of the Tenant Reference Board Committee, develops programs that address the needs of our tenants within the local community. These programs may target specific groups within our tenant population for example the young, the aged or specific localities. The programs aim to address specific needs that are identified by our directors, employees and support partners,

4.2.5 Informing the local community

Pacific Link keeps the local community well informed of social housing issues through our organisational communication plan, including:

- Providing material to the local media regarding housing issues and Pacific Link news.
- Providing our annual report and quarterly newsletters to all stakeholders.
- Updating our website.
- Developing a policy on communications via social media.
- Speaking as a guest to organisations requiring information.
- Attending local forums, seminars and workshops to promote housing issues.

4.2.6 Donations & Sponsorships

Pacific Link supports our local community and projects which fit within our mission and values. We will consider requests for support from groups and organisations in community development, facilities and services for the disadvantaged, youth, aged and people with disabilities both in Australia and overseas. We do not provide support for political or sectarian organisations,

Donations or sponsorships require approval of the CEO. Requests for donation should include a brief statement of the organisation's purpose, governance and achievements. The organisation's ABN and/or charitable fundraising number must be provided.

4.2.7 Planning

Pacific Link involves itself as the opportunity arises in local and regional planning by:

- Discussion with councils re affordable housing and planning density issues.
- Regional housing planning forums and submissions.
- Regional and local networks.
- Discussions with local, state and federal government representatives.

4.2.8 Integration of service

Pacific Link involves itself in the integrating of services within the community by committee and board membership of peak bodies, attending appropriate forums and identifying other avenues for meaningful debate about community issues.

¹ NSW Performance Requirement 2.2 Community Involvement requires business goal on contributing to local community, identifies opportunities to make a positive difference in community and reports on progress. Also National Std 4.2.2 on sustainable improvements in lives of tenants and communities.

4.2.9 Joint Ventures

Pacific Link develops joint ventures for maximising social housing by forging partnerships with other agencies, government departments and local councils in accordance with the Strategic Plan. Refer Policy 5.5 Business Planning and Development.

4.2.10 Monitoring

We monitor the success of our strategies in building community networks and positive recognition for the organisation, our tenants and the wider community by:

- Receiving regular reports from our appointed communications adviser.
- Regularly reviewing the benefits achieved, feedback received and tangible outcomes against the cost of our effort and contribution.
- Monitoring recognition of our best practice initiatives from regulator, funding body and sector feedback.