



QUEENSLAND
MANUFACTURED HOME OWNERS
ASSOCIATION INC.

Media Release – For immediate use

Older Queensland Home Owners Left Wondering and Feeling Let Down

Logan City, Queensland, 27th September 2024

The Issue

Owners of homes in Queensland's manufactured home residential parks are feeling concerned, disappointed and very much let down by their political leaders in the run-up to the state's forthcoming election.

With only a few weeks to go before election day, none of the political parties hoping to form government or to have members elected, has included any indication in their housing policies released to date which address concerns that they have been complaining to the government and parliament about for a number of years.

Why Are Home Owners Feeling Let Down?

Home owner's disappointment is made worse by the fact that over the past 10 years government housing strategy plans have always included measures designed to address issues faced by older Queenslanders transitioning into different housing option in their retirement, including those specific to those choosing to live manufactured home residential parks.

QMHOA (Queensland Manufactured Home Owners Association), is the peak body representing home owners in these parks. Roger Marshall, President of QMHOA stated, "*We feel let down by the fact that we can discern no mention of manufactured homes residential parks or indeed the broader topic of homes for older Queenslanders in the government's 'Homes for Queenslanders' strategy.*"

Previous housing strategies like the overarching *Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-27* and the *Queensland Housing Strategy Action Plans 2017-20* and *2021-25* all included strong responses to the recommendations of the *Residential Transition for Older Queenslanders* report published in 2016, including actions to address the concerns of home owners in manufactured home residential parks. The government's *Homes for Queenslanders* housing strategy, published in February this year makes no mention of either the area of homes for older Queenslanders or any actions to address the concerns of resident in residential parks.

In June this year there was significant progress on one of the actions included in the *Queensland Housing Strategy Action Plans 2021-25*, when the Queensland parliament passed the *Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Amendments Bill, 2024* which introduced reforms designed to address major concerns that home owners in parks have expressed over a number of years. However the reforms were only targeted at the concerns they had about excessive increases in their site rents and the procedures mandated for the selling of their homes. Many other concerns of home owners were not addressed.

QMHOA President Roger Marshall explained, *“Addressing the issue of excessive site fee increases was a priority for home owners, but a consistent theme of the feedback we hear from home owners is that though the legislative reforms made so far are extremely welcome, they are far from being comprehensive enough in scope to address the full range of concerns that they have. Until now we have had every reason to believe that the government understood this, and would go on to address other issues they know home owners are concerned about in the future.”*

What Are The Concerns Home Owners Want Addressed?

The underlying issue that owners of manufactured homes in residential parks face is that when they sign a site agreement (contract) with a park owner to place their home and live in a park, they enter into a business relationship in which there are systematic structural inequities and a major imbalance in the power of the two parties. On the one hand there is a large corporation with considerable resources and on the other the individual older person or couple. Sadly many home owners believe that their park owner is abusing this imbalance. There is considerable evidence that they are correct.

President Roger Marshall says, *“Home owners regularly complain to QMHOA that they are being treated unfairly, disrespected by their park owner, often they speak of being bullied and share stories to support their claims. We believe that not only is this a totally unacceptable state of affairs in a community like ours, but also that ultimately it also poses a threat to the potential positive role that manufactured home residential parks industry can play in the Queensland housing sector”*

Home Owners look to the government to address this overarching issue in whatever ways are possible, including by taking the measures that QMHOA has asked the political parties, hoping to form the next government, to commit to address the following:

- The Government to honour the commitment made in the *Queensland Housing Strategy Action Plan 2021-25* to explore options to improve Queenslanders living in residential parks' access to timely and consistent decision-making to help them resolve housing issues and disputes
- The Government to act on the 2024 Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Parliamentary Committee's recommendation for an examination of the future shape and structure of the manufactured homes residential parks industry. The Committee recognised the need for an examination of an expanded range of ownership models for the sector that meet the needs of seniors who rely on residential parks catering for people on low to medium retirement incomes. They recommended a thorough examination and analysis of the Act.
- Actions by the Government and other stakeholders aimed at addressing the major concerns that many home owners have about the nature of relationships between themselves and park owners.
- Provision of some form of registration to provide home owners with proof of ownership of their manufactured homes
- Implementation of the Amendments Bill to be fully completed in ways that ensure the interests of homeowners are safeguarded
- Ways to be found to address 2 significant issues currently being faced by home owners in many parks, i.e.:
 - Additional costs being added to utility usage charges paid in addition to site rents;
 - Prohibition of access to the benefits of installing solar panels on their homes.
- Examination of the impact of the 3.5% element of the site rent cap introduced in the 2024 Amendments Act. In particular whether there have been significant gaps between

site rent increases and increases in the aged pension for some home owners, when CPI is low as part of the statutory 3 year review; and for any finding which shows home owners to be significantly disadvantaged to be addressed.

- Monitoring of the consequences of a recent QCAT decision that some homes in residential parks do not satisfy the requirements of the definition of a manufactured home in the Act; and if necessary, taking steps to address problems that threaten the interests of home owners caused by the decision.

What Are Manufactured Home Residential Parks?

Owning a home in a manufactured home park has the potential to be a very good option for comfortable, low-cost, and secure retirement living for people who will live out the rest of their lives on low to modest incomes. In these parks the retiree owns the home but not the land upon which it is situated and they pay the owners of the park a weekly site fee to cover the leasing of the land on which the home is situated, access to and use of communal facilities and the provision of other services.

According to data provided by the Queensland Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works, there are over 23,000 manufactured homes in Queensland. 91.5% are situated in approximately 100 purpose-built parks, the remainder are in multi-use parks where they are co-located in tourist and caravan parks. An increasing majority of purpose-built parks are owned by large business corporations, many of them multi-national.

Who Are The Home Owners?

The findings of a survey of residents in parks carried out by the Department showed that the majority of home owners live on low to middle retirement incomes. Over 50% of respondents were on incomes of \$40,000 per annum or less; with 53.6% receiving a full aged pension and a further 24.4% receive a part aged pension.

Queensland Manufactured Home Owners Association Inc. (QMHOA) is a not for profit, volunteer based, Statewide organisation which fosters fair and equitable treatment of homeowners in manufactured homes parks, through its action areas of Assistance, Education and Advocacy.

The Association is governed and managed by a Committee of volunteers who are elected annually by our members. We have a contract with the Queensland Government under the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works' Building Consumer Confidence Program to provide education and assistance services to home owners and prospective home owners in manufactured home parks and professional advocacy to government and other stakeholders on their behalf.

Media Contacts

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