

Hitting the Roof

*Public housing experiences of people
from a non-English speaking background
with disability*



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Why get this report?

People from a non-English speaking background (NESB) with disability want and need access to secure, safe, affordable public housing, just the same as other low income earners in NSW. The NSW Department of Housing wants to provide housing equitably to the NSW population. At the moment there are a number of barriers that prevent this, including lack of knowledge and understanding by people from NESB with disability about the housing 'system' in NSW and lack of knowledge and understanding by Department of Housing staff about the impact of culture and disability on a person's housing needs. *Hitting the Roof* identifies and provides examples of these barriers and sets out practical strategies for overcoming them.

Who is the report for?

This report is for policy and operations staff in the NSW Department of Housing; workers in the disability field; and policy researchers working on social and affordable housing issues.

What is in the report?

Hitting the Roof documents the problems experienced by people from a NESB with disability in getting access to public housing and services provided by the Department of Housing in NSW. It deals with general problems applicants have in dealing with the NSW Department of Housing (eg, Departmental staff lack of understanding of the effects of disability or culture on housing needs); difficulties in getting into public housing (especially being accepted for priority housing); and difficulties experienced by public housing tenants who are from a NESB with disability (including racist harassment from other tenants; getting the Department to carry out repairs and modifications needed to accommodate disability; getting a transfer).

The report examines these problems in the context of the Department's disability action plan and ethnic affairs priority statement and raises questions about how well these plans are being implemented.

What strategies are proposed for achieving the outcomes we are seeking?

Hitting the Roof focuses on practical actions the Department can take to make its services more accessible to people from a NESB with disability. It puts forward 37 recommendations in areas ranging from staff training and recruitment practices to dealing with tenant disputes. These recommendations are intended to assist the Department to overcome the barriers that exist at present for public housing applicants and tenants from a NESB with disability.

MDAA is the peak body for people from a NESB with disability and their families and carers in NSW. MDAA aims to promote, protect and secure the rights and interests of people from a NESB with disability and their families and carers in NSW.