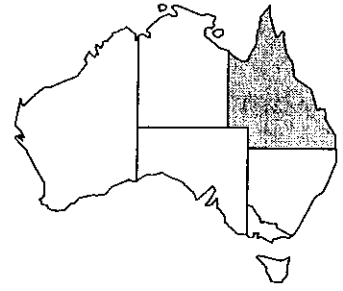


Home, sweet home!

## Home, sweet home!



Over 10 years ago a small organisation called Homes West was set up in Brisbane as a result of a group of parents who were determined that their sons and daughters would have 'homes of their own'. Their family members all had multiple disabilities. Two people had been in institutions and group homes for a significant period of time and their families had brought them home because of their poor quality of life.

The families were connected to an organisation which gave them information on how their ideas could be put into practice. This agency also helped to set up Homes West. Over time, the families agreed on a set of principles to guide their individual efforts. One principle was that their family members are safer if decision-making and control is in the hands of those who know them intimately, love them, care about them and who are part of their lives over the long term.

People are safer when decision-making is in the hands of those who know the person intimately and who are part of their lives over the long term.

In time, Homes West became incorporated as a community association and received a small amount of funding to employ a co-ordinator. Importantly, this person worked under the direction of the families and provided the skills and knowledge to develop what kinds of support would be needed for each individual with disability.

Some of the individuals were eligible for, and already received, some funding. Realising that they could not sit back and wait, the families used this funding to start putting their ideas into practice. Homes West remains committed to getting full funding for individuals who have still not received a package of support which covers all the hours that they need.

## **What is happening now?**

Homes West is now an organisation which receives and seeks funding for, and provides accommodation support to, a small number of adults with disability. It focuses on people with high support needs and assists them to move into their own home.

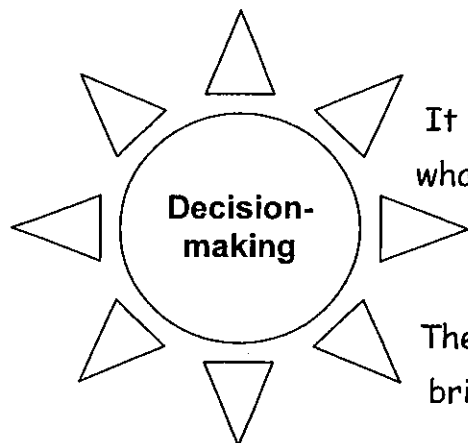
**Homes West believes that families and friends:**

**have the  
greatest  
commitment  
to, and  
knowledge  
about, the  
person**

**want, and can  
handle, the  
responsibility  
of designing  
valued roles for  
their sons and  
daughters**

**do not  
necessarily  
want to hand  
over all care  
and  
responsibility  
of the person  
to the service  
system**

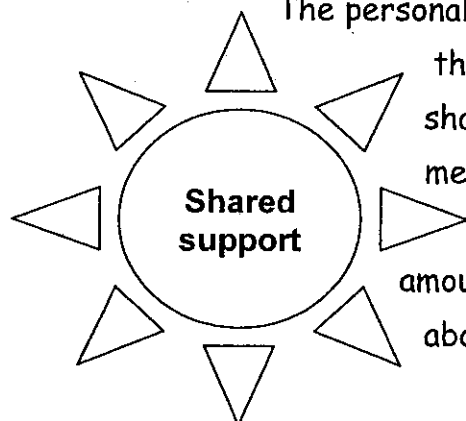
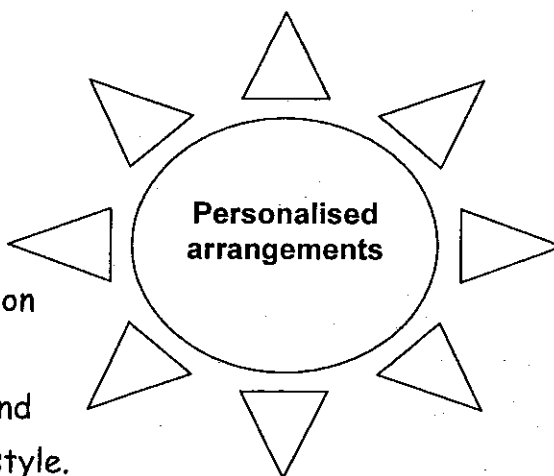
## What are some of the key, guiding ideas?



It is the families who develop the picture of what is needed for the person to have a home of their own.

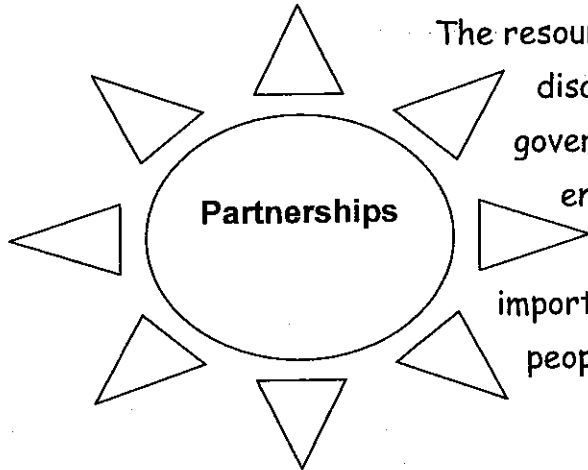
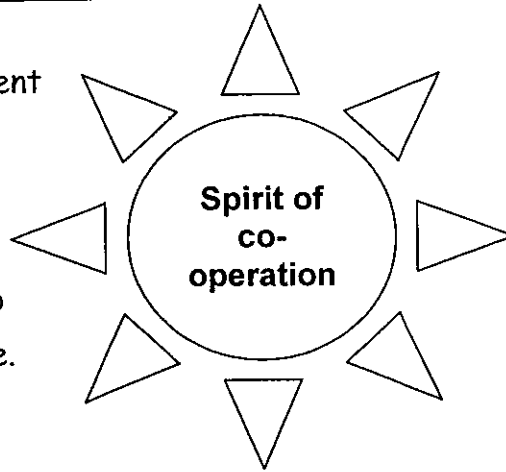
The families use the co-ordinator to help them bring the picture to life.

Significant effort is put into building networks of people around each individual. The co-ordinator works with the person and the family to agree on who will provide support, the relationships to be developed and nurtured, and the person's lifestyle.



The personal care and other support needed by the person to live in their own home is shared between paid workers, family members and friends of the person. Some individuals have significant amounts of funding and others have about 35 - 50 hours per week.

All the families make a commitment to assist each other - not in providing direct care to each other's family member - but in supporting each other to develop each person's home and their life.



The resources of families, people with disability, community agencies and government are brought together to ensure that each individual lives a real life in the community. The most important resource they have discovered is people working together.

*The first person to move into a home of her own was Susan. Sue moved six and a half years ago. Today, like others in similar situations, she has:*

- ◆ *the security of living in her own home;*
- ◆ *the power and processes in place to enable her to make her own decisions;*
- ◆ *workers who know what she wants when she is trying to make her views about her life known;*
- ◆ *a presence in her community – local people know her;*
- ◆ *a team of workers who work together to support her to achieve her chosen lifestyle;*
- ◆ *opportunity to attend church regularly, head off to the RSL regularly with friends, visit the gym, all supported by workers chosen because they have similar interests;*
- ◆ *friends who come to dinner or just call in;*
- ◆ *time to call in at her parents' home just about every day.*

## What does it take for a person to move into their own home?

Homes West has developed three phases towards helping a person get their own home. These are:

### **Phase 1 Preparation**

This is a time when each person and their family paints the picture of what they would like to see happen. The co-ordinator's role is very important at this stage. She or he works closely with each person and their family to explore all the options and possibilities. The co-ordinator uses the information gathered to start making links with other people in the community where the person would like to live. In addition, they think of ways in which the person can be helped to try out different living arrangements.

### **Phase 2 Moving Out**

Phase 2 begins when the person with disability is ready to move out of their family home. Several housing options are considered, including living in a home unit or flat, living in a flat attached to the family home or living in a house. Both the private and public housing markets are considered.

At this time, depending on the amount of funding available, the families participate in choosing paid staff and developing their roles. If the funding does not cover all the paid hours, the co-ordinator works on a way in which the person will always have support when they need it and this includes by relatives and friends.

Homes West responds to the unique differences of each family and person in relation to the appointment of paid support staff.

Depending on what each family wants, the co-ordinator can do all, or some, or none, of the following:

- advertising;
- short listing applicants;
- attending interviews;
- carrying out training as decided by the family and person; and
- setting up the procedures agreed to by the family.

The role of the family starts to change gradually as the paid support evolves. In the beginning, family members provide the main support and staff work alongside family members or friends. This can happen for different periods of time, depending on the needs of the individual with disability.

This is intentionally done so that:

- **the paid staff really get to know the person;**
- **the family can develop trust that the paid staff understands and respects their family values and the culture of their family;**
- **the standards expected by the family and the person with disability are explained, understood and firmly in place.**

Each person, in conjunction with their family and friends, decides what they want to do and this 'calendar' reflects the person's unique character and desires. Wherever possible, workers who share a particular interest are scheduled to support the person. Importantly, the workers do not decide what they are going to do with, or for, the person on any particular day.

**Phase 3  
Living a real  
life**

This phase is ongoing and focuses on:

**The person**

- ensuring that the person has security over their own home;
- having arrangements in place for the person to make their own decisions;
- helping workers understand clearly what the person wants and how they communicate their needs.

**Family and friends**

- friends dropping around;
- family members responding to invitations to dinner or other events;
- the person being invited to the homes of family and friends.

**Community**

- ensuring the person has valued presence and participation in the community;
- working towards the person becoming known by local people;
- involvement in typical local community activities.

Homes West does not control the agenda. They do not decide who visits people's homes, when people can come and go, what kinds of activities and events happen for the person with disability; rather the organisation ensures that it does what needs to be done under instruction from the person and the family.