

# Policy – Rent

## Policy Statement

We will ensure rent is affordable for all tenants allocated to BeyondHousing properties.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline:

- Calculating rent – long term housing properties
- Providing information about household income
- Rent and income reviews
- Response to changes in household circumstances
- Managing rent arrears
- Tenant hardship

## Scope

This policy applies to all long term housing owned by BeyondHousing.

## Policy Detail

BeyondHousing will:

- Set rent within established affordability benchmark
- Communicate clearly to applicants and tenants as to how we set and review rent
- Respond to changes in household circumstances
- Set rent to comply with contractual, legal and regulatory obligations

## Calculating Rent

BeyondHousing applies different approaches to calculating rent that is determined by the type of long term housing applied for. These are as follows:

Housing Type	Rent Subsidy Rate
Social Housing / Victorian Housing Register applicants	25% of total household income plus Maximum Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA)
Affordable Housing	30% of total household income plus Maximum Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) If 30% of the total household income exceeds 75% of the market rent, the rent is capped at 75% of the market rent payable.

Please note:

Total household income is determined by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Assessable Income Guidelines.

Click here for a copy: [DHHS Assessable Income guidelines](#)

Total household income includes income from all sources; gross wages and salaries, income from investments, Centrelink payments, child support payments, overseas pensions, and WorkCover/TAC/other compensation payments.

### **Providing information about household income**

Tenants and applicants are required to provide BeyondHousing with evidence of total household income before being offered a tenancy with BeyondHousing or at an annual rent review.

### **Rent and income reviews**

- Rent and income reviews will be held annually for each tenancy
- Tenants will be notified that their current total household income must be provided within 2 weeks
- Tenants will be provided with a 60 day notice of any increase in rent charges as per the RTA 1997
- Tenants will be provided with a clear explanation as to how their rent has been calculated
- BeyondHousing may increase a tenant's rent to maximum market rent if the tenant does not provide the information within the timeframe required
- If a tenant subsequently provides information about household income after a rent subsidy review, changes will only take effect on and from the date the tenant provided the household income.

### **Market rent**

BeyondHousing will set market rent to match the rent payable for an equivalent property in a similar location in the private rental market) that will be determined by an independent open market rent valuation or property professional.

### **Response to changes in household circumstances**

- Tenants are encouraged to contact their Property Manager if their household circumstances change or they are facing hardship
- BeyondHousing determines hardship by looking at the individual circumstances of the household
- All responses to changes in household circumstances will be assessed on a case-by-case basis
- Tenants will be offered a Tenancy Plus referral – a program that provides support to assist tenants to keep their current home when they are at risk of losing their tenancy
- Rent reassessment will be determined in line with changes to household income if necessary
- If rent at a particular property becomes unaffordable due to change in household circumstances, BeyondHousing will endeavour to assist the tenants to find a more affordable option

Refer to Tenancy Management Policy – response to changes in household circumstances

### **Managing rent arrears**

BeyondHousing will:

- Actively encourage tenants who are having financial difficulties to contact their Property Manager if they are having difficulty paying their rent
- Focus on contacting the tenant when the first payment is missed, rather than waiting for rent arrears to accrue
- Keep the tenants support agency/worker up to date, if relevant.
- Provide referral options to the tenant regarding tenant advocacy services and local support agencies.
- If the arrears reach 14 days, a 14 day Notice to Vacate will be issued according to the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*.
- At every opportunity, tenants will be provided with the option to sign a debt repayment agreement, to ensure any arrears that have been accrued can be repaid at a reasonable rate.

## Human rights considerations

In making decisions, BeyondHousing must give proper consideration to the relevant human rights in accordance with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 s38(1) (the charter)*.

This consideration should include the potential impact the proposed action we are undertaking may have on the tenants and their household member's rights under the Charter.

## Related:

### Policy

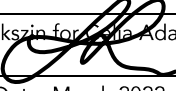
- Compliments and Complaints
- Eligibility & Allocation
- Maintenance & Repairs
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Rights and Responsibility
- Sustaining Tenancies
- Tenancy Management

### Documents

- Homelessness Services Guidelines & Conditions of Funding May 2014
- [DHHS Assessable Income guidelines](#)

### Legislation

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006) Vic
- Housing Act (1983) Vic
- Residential Tenancies Act (1997) Vic
- Child Wellbeing & Safety Act (2005) Vic
- Children, Youth & Families Act (2005) Vic

Approver: Leisa Makszin for Leila Adams (CEO) Signed: 	Date Reviewed: March 2019
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