POLICY

Affordable Housing

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to set out how Housing Trust will determine eligibility and manage applications and property allocations within Housing Trust's affordable rental housing programs. Housing Trust manages affordable housing properties in accordance with the NSW Affordable Housing Ministerial Guidelines.

Definition

Affordable housing is housing that is appropriate for the needs of a range of very low to moderate income households and priced so that these households are also able to meet other basic living costs, such as food, clothing, transport, medical care and education.

As a rule of thumb, housing is usually considered affordable if it costs less than 30% of gross household income.

Applications

Applications for affordable rental housing must be made directly to Housing Trust. Housing Trust only accepts applications for affordable housing when there is a current vacancy.

An application for affordable housing cannot be made through the NSW Housing Register - Housing Pathways, however applications for affordable housing may be accepted from people who are listed on the NSW Housing Register. If a household accepts an offer of a tenancy in an affordable housing property, they will be regarded as suitably housed and will be removed from the NSW Housing Register.

Housing Trust will assess affordable housing applications and evidence as provided by applicants to determine eligibility.

Eligibility

Affordable housing applicants must be able to demonstrate that they:

- are a citizen or have permanent residency in Australia
- are a resident of NSW
- are able to establish their identity

- are able to sustain a tenancy, either independently or with support
- are 18 years of age or older
- are within the income limits for affordable housing
- are able to demonstrate a connection to the local area which may include employment, education, family or a resident in the Illawarra area
- do not have assets (including property, shares or investments) which could solve their housing need
- If applicable, make repayments of any former debts to Housing NSW or a community housing provider

Income Limits

Income limits vary between affordable housing programs and according to household size.

Affordable Housing rent is set in accordance with the NSW Affordable Housing Ministerial Guidelines.

For properties that have received funding from Housing Australia under the Housing Australia Future Fund may have different income limits. These will be released by Housing Australia and issued to Housing Trust.

Income limits are reviewed annually to reflect Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustments to social security pensions, and benefits or movements in average weekly earnings.

Allocations

Affordable housing properties will be allocated to a mix of very low, low and moderate income households. Decisions relating to the allocation of properties within Housing Trust's affordable housing program will be based on:

- financial eligibility
- priority needs
- connection to local area
- accordance with an allocation strategy where this exists

Housing Trust may sign affordable Housing tenants to a 12 (twelve) month fixed term tenancy agreement. The tenant's eligibility to remain in affordable housing will be reviewed prior to the tenancy agreement expiring and if the tenant remains eligible, Housing Trust will re-sign an additional 12 (twelve) month fixed term tenancy agreement or allow the tenancy agreement to continue onto a periodic agreement.

Subsidised Rent

Affordable housing rent will be set at a discount to market rent and takes into account household income and capacity to pay. Housing Trust will ensure that rent is affordable to tenants and that the program is financially viable.

Rent will be charged at up to 30% of gross household income.

When a tenancy commences in an affordable housing property, the rent will be assessed on the household's average gross income for the previous twelve (12) months. A tenant's rent cannot be reassessed for the first six (6) months of their tenancy. All future rent assessments will be based on the household's current gross income.

Housing Trust requires the payment of two (2) weeks rent in advance at the commencement of tenancy.

Market Rent

Market rent is the rent that a property would attract if rented on the private market. Housing Trust will assess the market rent of all properties on an annual basis and advise tenants of the outcome as per the requirements of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010.

Housing Trust will adhere to the NSW Affordable Housing Ministerial Guidelines when setting market rent.

Bond

Housing Trust requires the payment of four (4) weeks market rent as bond at the commencement of tenancy.

Where the payment of four (4) weeks market rent in full will cause financial hardship for an applicant the Tenancy Team Leader may approve for the bond to be paid over a twelve (12) month period.

Ongoing Eligibility

To remain eligible for affordable housing, every 12 months households must continue to meet the criteria as outlined above and be able to demonstrate ongoing need. The exception is income, where existing tenants are permitted to earn up to 25% above the maximum eligibility income for moderate income before they become ineligible. Ongoing eligibility income limits are outlined within the NSW Affordable Housing Ministerial Guidelines.

Eligibility Assessments

Eligibility will be assessed annually as part of Housing Trust's rent review process. Tenants are required to notify Housing Trust of any change to income or household within 21 consecutive days, a new eligibility assessment will be completed and if applicable a new rent will be applied. Where it is found that a tenant is no longer eligible Housing Trust will terminate the tenancy under the Residential Tenancies Act 2010. Prior to issuing a notice of termination Housing Trust will notify the tenant of its intention to do so.

Housing Trust will seek to assist tenants to access alternate housing options and determine a relocation strategy which may include a reasonable period to secure alternative housing depending on individual circumstances.

Succession of Tenancy

Succession of tenancy may be approved in line with *Housing Trust's Succession of Tenancy Policy*. Any persons applying to succeed a tenancy in an affordable housing property must meet all eligibility criteria listed in this policy.

Right of Appeal

If an applicant or tenant believes Housing Trust has made a wrong decision a formal review of the decision should be requested. To do this, the applicant or tenant is required to complete a Housing Trust Appeals Form stating why they disagree with the decision. *Housing Trust's Appeals Policy* and form are available by contacting the Housing Trust office or alternatively, may be downloaded from our website: www.housingtrust.org.au

If the appellant is not satisfied with the outcome of the internal appeal they can make an appeal to the Independent Housing Appeals Committee (HAC). HAC is an independent appeals agency for all NSW Social Housing clients.

Housing Trust will advise the appellant on how to lodge an appeal with HAC. Alternatively HAC may be contacted directly by visiting www.hac.nsw.gov.au or by calling 1800 629 794.

Reference or Related Documents

Internal

1. Affordable Housing Procedure
2. Review of Rent Subsidies - Affordable Housing Policy
3. Privacy Policy
4. Tenant Initiated Rent Review Procedure
5. Housing Trust Initiated Rent Review Procedure
6. Rental Subsidy Fraud Policy
7. Appeals Policy
8. Succession of Tenancy Policy
9. 105007 – Affordable Housing Annual Review Checklist
10. Affordable Housing Allocation Strategy

External

1. Residential Tenancies Act 2010
2. Residential Tenancies Regulation 2019
3. NSW Affordable Housing Ministerial Guidelines
4. NSW Community Housing Rent Policy

Policy Version Control

Version	Details of Improvements	Release Date	Approval/Release Details
V 1.0	New Policy	01.07.2016	Approved for release by GM:C&C
V 2.0	Updated Policy to cover all Affordable Housing Programs. This policy replaces the NRAS Affordable Housing Policy, which has been retired. The NRAS Policy was created when HT only had NRAS Affordable Housing in the portfolio. The new Policy is broader and covers all HT's Affordable Housing Programs.	23.08.2018	Approved for release by Amanda Winks Chief Housing Officer
V 3.0	Paragraph added under Rent heading to explain how a tenants rent is calculated at the beginning of their tenancy and when they are eligible to ask for re-assessment of rent.	07.02.2019	Approved for release by Amanda Winks Chief Housing Officer
V 4.0	Sentence added under applications to reflect when Housing Trust will accept applications and paragraph added under allocations to explain tenancy agreements may be signed on a 12 month fixed term. Reviewed Policy referred to the Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) Readers' Panel on 19.08.2019.	16.09.2019	Approved for release by Amanda Winks Chief Housing Officer
V 5.0	Policy updated to reflect advice on market rent setting for affordable housing. Policy endorsed by HT's Executive Leadership Team on 15.06.2020	18.06.2020	Approved for release by Amanda Winks Chief Housing Officer
V 6.0	Policy updated to include former debt repayments under eligibility and information in relation to succession of tenancy. Policy endorsed by HT's Executive Leadership Team on 21.09.2020	22.09.2020	Approved for release by Amanda Winks Chief Operations Officer
V 7.0	Out of schedule Policy update to provide clear information on how affordable housing rents are managed and to provide updated links to the NSW Affordable Housing Ministerial Guidelines released July 2021	27.06.2022	Approved for release by Amanda Winks Chief Operations Officer
V 8.0	Policy updated to include that tenants are required to notify HT of change of income within 21 consecutive days. Eligibility updated in line with NSW Affordable Housing Ministerial Guidelines 2022/23.	13.07.2023	Approved for release by Miranda Serkinic Acting, COO
V 9.0	Policy updated to amend the market rent setting approach to ensure in line with NSW Affordable Housing Guidelines	29.08.2024	Approved for release by Nikayla Beer-Herring, COO
V 10.0	Policy reviewed in line with NSW Affordable Housing Guidelines 2023/2024. Policy review date updated to September annually when updated guidelines are released. Policy also updated to include option to pay bond over a 12 month period.	29.01.2025	Approved for release by Nikayla Beer-Herring, COO
V 11.0	Policy updated to remove reference to the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS), include reference to Housing Australia Future Fund and reference Housing Trust's Affordable Housing Allocation Strategy.	15.06.2026	Approved for release by Chief Operations Officer
V 12.0	Policy updated to amend definition of Affordable Housing to align with definition as it appears within the NSW Affordable Housing Ministerial Guidelines	07.07.2026	Approved for release by CEO

Do you need an Interpreter or a Translator?

If you need help to understand this letter, please contact Telephone Interpreters on 131 450 and ask them to call Housing Trust on 4254 1166 at no cost.

Trebate li tumača ili prevoditelja?

Ako vam je potrebna pomoć da biste mogli razumjeti ovo pismo, kontaktirajte telefonske tumače na broj 131 450 i zamolite ih da nazovu Stambeno povjerenstvo (Housing Trust) na broj 4254 1166, bez ikakvih troškova.

Да ли вам треба тумач или преводилац?

Ако вам треба помоћ да разумете ово писмо, молимо вас јавите се на 131 450 за телефонског преводиоца и затражите да бесплатно назову Housing Trust на 4254 1166.

¿Necesita un intérprete o un traductor?

Si necesita ayuda para entender esta carta, comuníquese con los intérpretes telefónicos en el 131 450 y solicite que llamen a Housing Trust al 4254 1166 sin costo alguno.

Bir Sözlü veya Yazılı Tercümana mı ihtiyacınız var?

Bu mektubu anlamak için yardıma ihtiyacınız varsa, lütfen 131 450 numaralı telefondan Telefonda Tercüman servisi ile iletişime geçin ve 4254 1166 numaralı telefondan Housing Trust'ı ücretsiz olarak aramalarını isteyin.

هل تحتاج إلى مترجم شفوي أو مترجم خطي؟

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مساعدة لفهم هذه الرسالة، فيرجى الاتصال بخدمة الترجمة الشفوية على الرقم 131450 واطلب منهم