



CENTRAL HIGHLANDS REGIONAL COUNCIL POLICY

Long Term Community Housing Rent Management

POLICY REF NO

CHRCP: 0031

1.0 Policy Purpose

1.1 To comply with the requirements of the *Housing Regulation 2015* to maintain a rent policy for community housing.

2.0 Policy Statement

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles council will use in setting rent, rent recovery and concessions for rent increases for community housing.

3.0 Setting the rent

3.1 A tenant in a property managed by council as the registered provider will have their rent assessed at 25% of the household's assessable income, plus the Commonwealth Rent Assistant to which all eligible housing members are entitled.

3.2 The rent is assessed using the Department of Housing and Public Works, Electronic Rent Calculator. Should the market of the property be less than the tenant's calculated rent, market rent will be charged.

4.0 Rent Assistance

4.1 Commonwealth rent assistance is not considered income and therefore is not assessed at 25%. Instead, council, as the registered provider, will add the total Commonwealth Rent Assistance to which all household members are entitled, to the rent assessment.

4.2 If a household is deemed eligible for Commonwealth Rent Assistance, the total amount of Commonwealth Rent Assistance to which they are entitled is added to their rent, regardless of whether they receive the payment or not.

5.0 Market Rent

5.1 The market rent is determined by the provider. In determining market rents, Council considers the private market rent for similar properties of the same standard in the area and any relevant data published on median rents.

5.2 Council will review market rents on an annual basis prior to undertaking rent reviews.

5.3 Council may seek independent valuations of properties but must have consideration for the private market rent for similar properties of the same standard in the area and any relevant data published on the median rents, when setting market rent.

6.0 Right to Appeal

6.1 Tenants have the right to appeal market rent assessments. Council will keep a copy of the methods used to derive a market rent for one year after the tenancy agreement.

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7.0 Rent Review

7.1 Council reviews rent for all community housing tenancies annually, or when they become aware of a change of household circumstances. Tenants are responsible for advising council of a change in circumstances and should be advised of the responsibility at sign-up. Tenants may request a reassessment of rent at any time because of a decrease in income or a change of household circumstances.

8.0 Overcharging of rent

8.1 If a tenant has been overcharged for rent due to having a low income or rent was miscalculated by the housing provider, a reimbursement will be required. This does not include where a tenant has failed to advise the housing provider of a reduction in income. Advice will be given as to how much this reimbursement is estimated to be made up of rent assistance. It will be the responsibility of the tenant to advise Centrelink of the reimbursement.

9.0 Rent Recovery

9.1 Council will ensure transparency by making clear the obligation to the tenant and the processes used by council in assisting them to meet their financial obligations, such as:

1. Making the process used to pay rent simple to administer and cost effective.
2. Providing tenants two options for the payment of rent as per the General Tenancy Agreement (RTA Form 18a) and the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*.

10.0 Rent Arrears

- 10.1 A tenant with a rent debt to council will be requested to enter into a mutual agreement to repay the debt in affordable instalments so as not to cause hardship. The payments must be maintained until the debt is cleared.
- 10.2 Council will pursue the recovery of debt through the provisions of the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008* where the tenant does not repay the monies owing in accordance with the agreement.

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| Strategic Link | <i>Housing Act 2003</i> (Qld) Housing Regulation 2015 (Qld) <i>Residential Tenancy and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008</i> (Qld) Department of Housing and Public Works Community Housing Rent Policy; and Social Housing Eligibility Policy Electronic Rent Calculator |
| Category | Housing |
| Lead Business Unit | Property Services |
| Public Consultation | No |

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| Related Documents | Community Housing Strategy |

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