

Hume Community Housing Association

Policy & Procedure: Allocations Affordable Housing

Purpose

- To provide clear guidelines on how Hume CHA allocates properties to applicants for housing.
- To ensure fair and transparent allocations.

Strategic Alignment

Goal 6.1 – Enhance Performance

Goal 6.3 – Responsive to Opportunities

Scope

This policy covers all applications for current Affordable Housing Program and allocation for new acquisitions.

Policy

1. Affordable Housing

- 1.1. Hume CHA is committed to using its Affordable Housing Program to assist people on low and moderate incomes
- 1.2. Hume CHA will develop partnerships to acquire additional affordable housing properties
- 1.3. Hume CHA will ensure all policies and procedures reflect the aims of and comply with the NSW Affordable Housing Guidelines (2010)
- 1.4. Applicants need to meet the following eligibility criteria:
 - 1.4.1. Earn a low to moderate income as outlined in the income eligibility bands set by SEWPaC and CFAH.
 - 1.4.2. Demonstrate a need for affordable housing and be unable to resolve this housing need in the private market in the medium to long term without assistance
 - 1.4.3. Not own any assets or property that could reasonably be expected to resolve the housing need
 - 1.4.4. This policy will not prevent eligible applicants from saving towards a deposit for a home
 - 1.4.5. Must be an Australian resident, living in New South Wales.

- 1.4.6. Must be able to demonstrate the ability to sustain a successful tenancy.
- 1.5. Currently Hume CHA does not have a waiting list for Affordable Housing. Properties will be advertised in a variety of ways to ensure the target applicants are aware of the program
- 1.6. A waitlist may be established as the program develops and more stock is acquired
- 1.7. Hume CHA will ensure a balance between providing affordable housing and financial sustainability through the allocation procedure
- 1.8. Allocations to Affordable Housing are managed by the Neighbourhood Services Team

Procedure

1. Project Income Targets

- 1.1. A target will be set on income levels for each Affordable Housing Project to ensure the financial viability of each project.
- 1.2. A percentage of allocations will be agreed upon and then nominated from each income band
- 1.3. The project income targets will comply with the relevant policies and guidelines for the project that the properties are acquired under e.g. NRAS.

2. Affordable Housing – Current Stock vacancy

- 2.1. On notification of a vacancy the Allocations Officer will liaise with the Income Coordinator to determine the income eligibility.
- 2.2. The Allocations Officer will advertise the property on the Domain website and Hume CHA website.
- 2.3. There will be set timeframes advertised for the submission of applications and applicants must abide by these timeframes to remain eligible through the process
- 2.4. An eligibility check list will be available for potential applicants online or upon request with a set date for lodgement.
- 2.5. The eligibility checklist will be reviewed by the Allocations Officer and if the applicant is potentially suitable, an application package will be provided
- 2.6. The application package will consist of the Application Form and a brochure outlining the aims of the Affordable Housing Program, eligibility criteria proof of income factsheet, rights and responsibilities and the property details if the applicant is successful.
- 2.7. Within 10 working days from the nominated closing date the Allocations Officer will review all applications and assess them for suitability.

- 2.8. The suitable applicant/s will be contacted for an interview to finalise the eligibility assessment
- 2.9. The approved applicant/s will be notified of the outcome of the assessment and their eligibility status in writing
- 2.10. An offer will be made if the applicant is deemed suitable for the available affordable housing property.
- 2.11. An accompanied viewing must occur before an offer is finalised.
- 2.12. A 48 hour period of consideration will be given
- 2.13. Applicants will be provided with clear information on the responsibilities of acceptance of a property
- 2.14. An affordable housing acceptance form must be signed by the applicant within 48 hours of the property inspection
- 2.15. Once a short list is established by Hume - If an offer is declined, applicants will have the option to remain on a waitlist for a period of 12 months
- 2.16. The Sign Up Policy and Procedure will then be followed.

3. Affordable Housing – New large scale acquisitions

- 3.1. At the acquisition stage for new properties an allocation priority list will be set in accordance with the program guidelines set in the tender, relevant state or federal program guidelines or association legislation and regulations
- 3.2. An advertisement campaign will be developed targeting the most suitable future tenants, taking into account the property types, location, income bands, household configurations, modified properties if available and targeted employment sectors
- 3.3. The properties may be advertised on property websites, Hume CHA website, local newspapers and at local employment sites i.e police stations, hospitals, child care centres
- 3.4. There will be set timeframes advertised for the assessment of eligibility and allocation process and applicants must abide by these timeframes to remain eligible through the process
- 3.5. An eligibility check list will be available for potential applicants online or upon request with a set date for closure of applications.
- 3.6. The eligibility checklist will be reviewed by the Allocations Officer and if the applicant is potentially suitable, an application package will be provided
- 3.7. The application package will consist of the Application Form and a brochure outlining the aims of the Affordable Housing Program, eligibility criteria, proof of income factsheet and rights and responsibilities of the applicant if successful
- 3.8. Within 10 working days from the nominated closing date the Allocations Officer will review all applications and assess them for suitability.

- 3.9. Applicants will be contacted for an interview to finalise the eligibility assessment
- 3.10. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the assessment and their eligibility status in writing
- 3.11. An offer will be made if the applicant is approved for the available affordable housing property.
- 3.12. An accompanied viewing must occur before an offer is finalised.
- 3.13. A 48 hour period of consideration will be given
- 3.14. Applicants will be provided with clear information on the responsibilities of acceptance of a property
- 3.15. An affordable housing acceptance form must be signed by the applicant within 48 hours of the property inspection
- 3.16. Once a shortlist is established by Hume - If an offer is declined, applicants may have the option to remain on a shortlist for a period of 12 months
- 3.17. The Sign Up Policy and Procedure will then be followed.

4. Eligibility Assessment

- 4.1. The Applicant has to provide proof of gross income of all household members 18 years of age and over for 52 weeks prior to the submission of the application.
- 4.2. Acceptable documentation is outlined in the proof of income fact sheet.
- 4.3. Income details are compared to the applicable income bands, which are published by the Centre of Affordable Housing and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. The income is verified by the Income Coordinator.
- 4.4. The eligibility assessment will be completed annually to ensure eligibility is maintained.

5. Rent Assessment

- 5.1. Rent is calculated on the total gross income of all household members
- 5.2. Rent will not be more than 80% of the market rent.
- 5.3. Rent will be no more than 30% of total gross household income.
- 5.4. If an applicant is eligible to receive Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) then the CRA is maximised and charged at 100% and in conjunction with 30% of the total household income limited to the ceiling rent (80% of the market rent).
- 5.5. Rent assessment will be finalised once the property is accepted
- 5.6. The rent amount will be applicable for the duration of the fixed term lease.

6. Tenancy term

- 6.1. The Residential Tenancy Agreement (RTA) will be for a Fixed Term of 12 months
- 6.2. The RTA includes all standard conditions such as Clause 3.1 paying rent on time, Clause 15 use of the premises by tenant, Clause 39 smoke alarms as an example.
- 6.3. A Break Fee will be applicable to all Fixed Term leases

7. Review of market rent

- 7.1. The review of market rent will be conducted annually and tenants advised on the outcome and potential impact in conjunction with assessment and ongoing eligibility.

8. Continued Tenure

- 8.1. Hume CHA are responsible for assessing tenants' continuing eligibility each year by establishing the household income for the relevant year preceding the anniversary of the day on which they became tenants of the approved rental dwelling.
- 8.2. Tenancy managers should have arrangements in place to accommodate changes in tenant's circumstances which may impact on their ongoing eligibility to participate in the Scheme. For tenants of an approved rental dwelling, the 'eligibility year' is the period of 12 months commencing on the day, or the anniversary of that day, on which they became tenants of the dwelling. Tenants whose income exceeds the relevant upper income limit for their household type for two consecutive eligibility years cease to be eligible tenants.
- 8.3. Where an annual review indicates that a tenant's income for the preceding eligibility year exceeded the income limit by more than 25 per cent, they will be given an adjustment period of 12 months after which their eligibility ceases if their income again exceeds the income limit by more than 25 per cent at the end of that 12 month period.
- 8.4. It is the responsibility of the Hume CHA to ensure that tenants are eligible and remain eligible to rent an NRAS dwelling.

9. Cessation of eligibility

- 9.1. Tenants whose income exceeds the relevant upper income limit for their household type for two consecutive eligibility years cease to be eligible tenants.
- 9.2. If ineligible the tenant will need to seek alternative housing

10. Change in circumstances

- 10.1. Tenants must notify Hume of changes with income of family compliment
- 10.2. Refer to Change of Circumstances Policy (Affordable)

11. Exit strategies

- 11.1. Hume will support tenants to meet the aims of the Affordable Housing Program to exit the tenancy within 3 – 5 years.
- 11.2. Hume will promote budgeting programs and incentive schemes by governments to encourage home ownership
- 11.3. Annual notices regarding eligibility requirements for Affordable Housing and the programs aims and tenure restrictions will be provided
- 11.4. Annual inspections will be utilised to provide details on the program

12. Appeals and Complaints

- 12.1. Applicants will be provided with a copy of the Appeals Leaflet
- 12.2. On sign up Tenants will be provided with a copy of the Complaints Leaflet

Related Documents

Form: Eligibility Checklist
Form: Application for Affordable Housing
Eligibility Proof Of Income Factsheet
Rights and Responsibilities Brochure
Form: Affordable Housing Acceptance
Policy & Procedure: Sign Up
Eligibility Assessment
Residential Tenancy Agreement
Policy: Change of Circumstances (Affordable)

Responsibilities

- The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for the development, and review of this policy and procedure.
- Manager, Neighbourhood Services is responsible for the implementation of this policy and procedure.
- As part of the NRAS compliance responsibilities Hume will allocate to Neighbourhood Services Team Member on a project basis
- Staff are responsible for adhering to this policy and procedure.