

As a values led organisation Hume Community Housing is committed to referencing any policy decision against our values.

Hume's values are:

- Determined to Succeed
- Creators of Connectivity
- Builders of Resilience
- Champions of Change

PURPOSE

The aim of this policy is to:

- Provide clear guidelines on how Hume allocates vacant properties to applicants for general social, specific and supported housing programs
- Ensure open and transparent allocations process
- Utilise the allocation process to ensure a **property meets the customer's needs to prevent future barriers to sustainable tenancies**
- Ensure the allocation process reflects relevant legislation and guiding state and federal program policies
- **Allocate Hume's properties in a manner that ensures viability and sustainability of Hume's portfolio and community**

SCOPE

This policy aligns with the Housing Pathways Eligibility for Social Housing Policy and Social Housing Eligibility and Allocations Policy supplement.

POLICY

This policy outlines prioritisation and allocation of tenancies across our social housing programs.

- General Social housing
- Housing Independence Program and Supported Housing

For customers in our Housing for People with Disability program and Affordable Housing – please refer to the individual allocation policies.

Customers in our Temporary Accommodation Program (TAP) are referred by the Department Communities and Justice (DCJ) as per program guidelines.

NO WRONG DOOR APPROACH

Applicants for Social Housing can apply for inclusion on the shared Housing Pathways waiting list, through any participating Community Housing provider or Department Communities and Justice (DCJ).

Only one application is required to be submitted for assessment to be included on the housing waiting list.

Hume will prioritise the allocation of properties under Housing Pathways where the priority needs of applicants require these applicants to be housed earlier.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be considered for Social Housing programs, applicants need to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Be a citizen or have permanent residency in Australia
- Be resident in NSW
- Have a household income within the income eligibility limits
- Not own any assets or property which could reasonably be expected to resolve the housing need
- Be able to sustain a successful tenancy with or without support
- If applicable an applicant should be making repayments of any former debts to a social/public housing provider
- In general, eligible applicants must be at least 18 years of age

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CLASSIFICATION OF FORMER CUSTOMER ACCOUNTS

When a Social Housing customer leaves a home managed by either Hume, another Community Housing provider or Department Communities and Justice (DCJ) the account will be classified as:

- Eligible for a statement of satisfactory tenancy or satisfactory former social housing customer
- Less than satisfactory former social housing customer or occupant
- Unsatisfactory former social housing customer
- Ineligible former social housing customer

The satisfactory former customer category does not affect eligibility for social housing.

The less than satisfactory former tenant or occupant and the unsatisfactory former tenant category means that specific conditions must be met before a provider can make the application live on the NSW Housing Register.

The ineligible former tenant category affects eligibility for social housing.

Customers who have debts with a social housing provider must repay those debts.

Hume & other providers will still consider the customer for assistance if they demonstrate their commitment to repay the debt by making regular repayments

PROPERTY ALLOCATION

Hume Social Housing vacancies will be allocated by one of the following means:

- Management Transfers (based on longest wait time and urgency of need)
- Approved Local Letting Strategy
- Priority Approved Applicants
- General Housing Pathways wait turn and transfer applicants
- Properties that are identified as Ground Floor or Modified will only be allocated to those who are able to show a demonstrated need

MANAGEMENT TRANSFERS

Hume may choose to prioritise Hume Customer transfers over transfers from other housing providers in the same category. Management transfers are approved in accordance with the Hume Transfer Policy and are outside of the NSW Housing Register.

OFFER MANAGEMENT

Social housing applicants are entitled to receive two reasonable offers of accommodation (as defined by Housing Pathways).

TIMEFRAMES

If an offer is made, then the property must be viewed and accepted within 48 hours of Hume contacting the applicant.

A tenancy agreement must be signed within 48 hours.

Evidence must be supplied to substantiate the **applicants'** reason or not following these timeframes, Evidence could include:

- A doctors certificate
- A letter from a support provider
- Evidence of a pre-existing commitment i.e.: jury duty or court appearance
- Evidence of a family emergency that prevents the signing of a lease

WITHDRAWAL OF AN OFFER

Hume shall withdraw an offer if an assessment of an applicant/customer's current situation deems they are ineligible, e.g. if the property did not meet their needs.

This may occur due to a change in financial status, change in family circumstance or a Medical Supplement Form, a letter from their support provider etc.

Hume will notify the applicant/customer of the reasons for withdrawal and advise if the offer will be noted against the **applicants'** application.

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SUSPENDING AN APPLICATION

Hume will suspend an application for housing if an offer is made and the applicant can demonstrate they are unable to accept it due to circumstances outside of their control. This will ensure that they do not lose one of their two available offers.

Reasons would include:

- Hospitalisation
- Illness
- Overseas
- Prison

The applicant must contact Hume to advise that their situation has changed, and they wish for their application to be made live on the waiting list again.

REJECTION OF AN OFFER

Hume aims to offer the most suitable property to an applicant and will assess the property upon availability and identify the key factors such as location, bedrooms and mobility issues and use these factors to create a shortlist.

If the offer of housing matches the requirements of the applicant and no new evidence is supplied, it is regarded to be a valid offer.

Rejection of an offer based on personal preferences such as style of property, colour scheme, neighbourhood, layout or design, proximity to friends or family or suburb is not considered a valid reason.

If an offer of housing is rejected the following evidence is required:

Location within an allocation zone	Documentation substantiating the need for a specific location ie: access to a special school, support services
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Size of property	Documentation from a specialist that demonstrates that accepting the property will have a negative impact on the customers physical or mental health
Style of property i.e.: High-rise property or a modified property	

ENTITLEMENTS

Due to the limited supply of Social Housing properties there are bedroom entitlements based on household composition. Shortlists and offers will be made on the following basis:

House Hold Composition	Standard Bedroom Entitlement
Single person	Bedsitter, one or two bedrooms
Couple	One or two bedrooms
Single person or a couple with one other household member	Two or three bedrooms
Single person or a couple with two other household members	Two or three bedrooms
Single person or a couple with three other household members	Three or four bedrooms
Single person or a couple with four other household members	Three or four bedrooms
Single person or a couple with five other household members	Four or five bedrooms (if available). Note: Due to the limited availability of five-bedroom properties, households with this composition may be offered a four-bedroom property if there are no five-bedroom properties available.

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BEDROOM ALLOCATION FOR CHILDREN

Child is over 18 years of age	This person is considered an adult when allocating bedroom entitlement
Shared bedrooms	<p>Male and female children are expected to share a room until one reaches the age of 10 years</p> <p>Children of the same gender can share until 18 years of age.</p> <p>Exceptions may be made where evidence is supplied to demonstrate a need for separate rooms due to behavioural factors</p>
Shared Custody	Children must reside in the home for a minimum 3 days and nights to be considered a permanent household member for bedroom allocations purposes

EXCEPTIONS

Hume Housing also recognise the shortage in housing and our customers diverse cultural backgrounds and if it is evidenced that a **customer's** circumstances will be improved then a Manager can supersede standard allocation policy.

Hume will also consider the following when allocating homes:

- the importance of reconciliation of family members
- parental responsibilities
- age of children and bedroom entitlements within the next two- or three-years' time

Cultural Considerations

Hume may allocate Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander customers to a property that has one more bedroom than the minimum bedroom entitlement for the household, if the customer has requested this.

Hume acknowledges the family responsibilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers.

Additional bedroom due to medical condition or disability

- Evidence is required to support a request for an additional bedroom from a healthcare professional other than a General Practitioner ie: specialist, occupational therapist, psychiatrist
- Evidence to support the need for a bedroom for a carer to stay over must outline the number of nights they reside in the home

Court Orders

- Documentation from the Family Court

Bedroom size

Hume recognises that some properties will not accommodate multiple sharers due to their size and may allocate an additional room if deemed necessary.

REGISTERABLE PERSONS

A registerable person is someone who has been added to the NSW Child Protection Register. The offer and allocation of suitable housing must be considered against the Registerable Persons Guidelines to ensure risk mitigation to the community. Please see: Registerable Persons Policy and Procedure

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PROGRAM SPECIFIC AND LOCAL LETTING STRATEGIES

Hume may develop a local letting strategy for a specific area if it is determined that:

- Tenancy management issues exist or may develop
- A property is hard to let due to supply and demand
- There is a higher concentration of customers with social, economic or health issues residing in an area

Hume Housing may apply a local lettings strategy which varies the standard criteria or gives greater priority to certain applicants than would otherwise be the case.

Local Letting Strategies will be implemented once approved by Chief Executive Officer and formal review and evaluation of any strategy will take place within initial 6 months of implementation.

SENIORS HOUSING

Allocations to Seniors Housing properties are made from the Social Housing waiting list.

Consideration will be given to ‘ageing in place’ for any offers made to senior applicants to allow them to reside in their home for as long as they are able.

The shortlist will be restricted to customers over age 55 (45 if Aboriginal). On occasion Seniors’ accommodation may be allocated to a younger customer with a disability who requires modified accommodation.

Offers will consider:

- Reduced vision
- Decreased muscle strength or endurance
- Reduced mental processing capabilities
- Increased risk of falls due to balance
- Increased risk of illness
- Reduced hearing
- Decreased mobility

An assessment will take place to determine if the person is eligible to live in a Seniors Living Complex.

Household Members Under 55 years

In some instances, a person under 55 years of age may be required to provide support to those living in a Seniors Housing complex. Prior to approving them as a household member a review will take place to ensure that most customers are Seniors and character of the development is retained.

YOUTH HOUSING

Allocations to young people are made from the Social Housing waiting list and in general an eligible applicant must be at least 18 years of age.

Eligible applicants who are under 18 years of age must have demonstrated that:

- They meet the general eligibility criteria for Social Housing
- They have an income
- Social Housing is the best way to meet their accommodation needs
- Hume is satisfied that they will be able to meet their tenancy obligations

Consideration will be given to whether:

- The environment is conducive to maintaining a successful tenancy
- Locational needs are met
- There is access to support services if required

TEMPORARY ACCOMODATION

The intention of Temporary Accommodation is to provide customers a chance to secure alternative accommodation, whether crisis accommodation or private rental. It is a short-term temporary measure rather than a longer-term response.

The total assistance provided will not exceed 28 days in a 12-month period.

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Customers in need to emergency temporary accommodation must supply evidence to support their application and eligibility for Social Housing.

Temporary Accommodation is facilitated by Family and Community Services (FACS) and Hume in the Hunter Region.

Hume will assess customers presenting as homeless to assist eligible clients to find stable, longer-term accommodation.

HOUSING INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM (HIP)

- This program is short term up to 12 months transitional housing.
- Applicants can self-refer to the program or may be referred by an outside agency.
- Applications are assessed for program eligibility and added to an internal waiting list. They must also be eligible for Social Housing and have a live Housing Pathways application.
- Housing Independence Officers will allocate properties based on applicants with longest wait time, or at most significant risk, such as health deterioration, loss of children, domestic violence and at risk of harm, referring to their allocation's matrix.

SUPPORTED HOUSING PROGRAM

This program provides housing for up to 18 months.

- Nominations for the Supported Housing Program are made through the Support Partner and in accordance with the partnership nomination agreement
- Nominees referred to the projects must be eligible for and have a live social housing application
- Hume will work closely with the customer and Support Partner to ensure the tenancy is sustainable and to aid in the transition to longer term housing.

ABORIGINAL HOUSING

Hume will seek to maximise the allocation of properties to Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders in recognition of the higher levels of disadvantage and demonstrated access to housing.

We will endeavour to offer housing to a minimum 10% of Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander applicants through an affirmative allocation process.

HOUSING OPTIONS AND FLEXIBLE ALLOCATIONS

Hume recognise the changing needs of our customers and in accordance with Future Directions will consider flexible allocations to support customers who are ready to transition through the housing continuum.

Customer Independence Plans will be used to explore and identify viable housing options for customers.

Allocations will be open and transparent and compliant with program eligibility criteria.

PRIVACY

Hume is required by the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) to comply with the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) (subject to the other provisions of the Privacy Act).

The APPs regulate the way personal information is handled throughout its lifecycle, from collection to use and disclosure, storage, accessibility and disposal. Please see the Privacy Policy for further information.

FRAUD AND CORRUPTION

Properties shortlisted off Housing Pathways are allocated to the next approved and eligible applicant on the housing waitlist.

Concerns about the allocation process should be addressed to a Manager at Hume.

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