

HUME COMMUNITH HOUSING ASSOCIATION CO LTD

POLICY - CONFIDENTIALITY - April 1998 – Last amended August 2005

All information that any client gives us shall be treated with the utmost respect and deemed to be for Hume Staff eyes/ears only, unless the client gives specific, written, permission to do otherwise.

Whenever a client gives Hume documents, staff shall ask permission to photocopy them.

When an applicant is completing an application with Hume, staff will explain very carefully that the signed portion at the bottom of the form is giving Hume permission to speak to the Department of Housing regarding their application with them, and their named support agency on housing related issues.

When a tenant or applicant demonstrates either directly or through body language that they have something very personal to talk about they shall be invited to discuss their issues in the interview room that is reasonably sound proof.

Information linking tenants and addresses shall be screened so that other visitors at the front desk cannot see them. The computer screen should not be visible to visitors to the office. Receipts shall be handed directly to a tenant, and care shall be taken to have any personal information shielded from public view under the hutch of the front desk. Personal information shall not be left on top of the counter for others to see.

When staff are booting up to the Rent Program, care should be taken to ensure that non-staff people do not see the pass words being entered.

Tenants files and property fields shall be filed away into cabinets as soon as is reasonably possible, not left on desk tops when not being used. These filing cabinets shall be locked at night.

Requests for information from non-Hume sources

When a tenant in residence requires maintenance, permission must be gained from the tenant before giving their telephone number to a tradesperson.

When organisations request confirmation of tenancy for credit purposes, a senior member of Hume staff will only respond with a yes or no to information supplied by the enquiring organisation after calling the requesting agency back on the number they supply.

When other organisations are requesting information about a tenant nothing is divulged. Even when other Government Departments are requesting information,

eg The Police, Dept of Community Services, Social Security, Hume staff will say that they will get a message to the tenant that day to gain permission from the tenant. One staff member will hand deliver a note to the property that same working day, if the matter is urgent, requesting that urgent contact be made with Hume. If there is no response from the tenant and the matter is very pressing, then the matter must be discussed with the Tenancy manager, or an Executive Officer before any information that will enable contact to be made is divulged. The requesting organisation shall be called back to ensure veracity.

Dealing with personal paper work at the end of a tenancy.

Personal letters from doctors etc shall be separated from the application form and shredded, and only the application form, lease and payment records shall be kept for 7 years. This information shall be kept securely in archive.

Dealing with personal paperwork when an applicant is removed from the current housing list (ie when an applicant does not respond to a waiting list up-date)

Personal documentation shall be separated from the application form and shredded, and only the application form kept securely in the office for a further three years in case the applicant renews contact with Hume.

Information about tenants at Board Meetings

In most circumstances there is no need for individual tenants to be identifiable. However, where a dispute may be occurring, or where problems may arise due to contact with an MP, it may be necessary for directors to know the name of a tenant, but the tenant's name and address shall not be minuted, tenancy numbers shall be used.

Tenants' and Applicants' access to their information

Any tenant or applicant may see the paper work or computer screen we are holding with details about them. They must present identification before any of this information shall be shown or returned to them. Tenants and applicants may remove personal medical records. Hume needs to retain copies of documents that relate to the tenant's income or current housing.

Staffing Information

All information given to Hume by staff members or applicants for positions, in their role as employer shall be granted the same degree of confidentiality as stated above. Staff may access their own file at any reasonable time. Staff files will be kept in a locked cabinet that is only accessed by an Executive Officer or personnel staff or board members.

Privacy Policy.

This document sets out the policy of Hume Community Housing Association Co. Limited in relation to the handling of personal and sensitive information.

1. Statement of Commitment

Hume Community Housing Association ("Hume CHA") respects the privacy of all individuals in the workplace. Furthermore, Hume CHA is committed to ensuring that all Directors, Co Ordinator's and others involved in the management of Hume CHA comply at all times with their obligations under the *Privacy Act 1998(Cth)*.

2. National Privacy Principles

As Hume CHA does not, as yet, have an approved Privacy Code, (which is to be developed) it is bound by the National Privacy Principles (the "Principles"). The Principles will be binding on most private sector employers from 21 December 2001. Hume CHA will keep all its employees (and anyone else who may be affected) appraised of the status of its Privacy Code. This Privacy Code will override the status of the Principles when it receives approval from the Privacy Commissioner.

3. Information Held

Hume CHA currently holds some information in relation to its employees, contractors and other workplace participants. This information includes, but is not limited to:

- Tax file numbers;
- Information relating to the personal background of these workplace participants (such as their home address, sex, date of birth, nationality, languages spoken, their employment history, their educational qualifications, any illnesses and details of contact people in the event of any emergency); and
- Information documenting the work history of these workplace participants (such as their letters of appointment and bank account details as well as records of any salary adjustments, written warnings, salary sacrifice documents and sick leave taken.)

There are a variety of reasons why Hume CHA is required to hold this information. Some of these reasons include:

- Ensuring both Hume CHA and any workplace participants are meeting their obligations under relevant legislation as well as their contract if employment;
- Ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all workplace participants at times when they are performing work for Hume CHA; and
- Allowing appropriate insurance for these workplace participants.

While Hume CHA does contract out some of its services, any of the above information will not be disclosed to any contractor without the prior consent being obtained from any affected individual.

There may be certain circumstances where Hume CHA is contacted in relation to some or all of the above personal information, for example, when a Hume CHA employee has applied for a loan with a financial institution and that financial institution contacts us to verify details of income being received.

4. Complaints and Contact Details.

Anyone who feels that there has been an unwarranted invasion of their privacy should contact Judith Beveridge, Co Ordinator Client Services and Personnel, our Privacy Contact Officer.

While most employees will be aware of Hume CHA's contact details, they are set out below for convenience.

Hume Community Housing Association.

Level 1, 119 The Crescent

Fairfield. NSW 2165

Phone 9724 0554 Fax (728 6439 E.Mail judith@humecha.com.au

Privacy Statement –

The following Statement is Printed in the Hume Book and is therefore aimed at Tenants and Applicants.

As an applicant or tenant of Hume you will need to give Hume some information about yourself and the people who will live with you so that they can contact you, be sure you are eligible for their housing programs, calculate the rent, and understand special requirements. Hume respects and protects this personal information.

As a provider of community housing, Hume is committed to handle your personal information in accordance with the Federal Privacy Act 1988 and the NSW Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 and the Privacy Code of Conduct as set out by the Office of Community Housing.

This means that the personal information that is collected will only be used by Hume to secure and manage affordable housing for you unless you give permission to use it for any other reason, or there is a threat to life or health.

Hume will not collect information about you from anyone other than yourself, and they will not share your personal information with any other agency or person without receiving permission from you to do so. You can withdraw or change this permission at any time.

You can request access to your personal information at any time to make sure it is accurate and up to date, and Hume is committed to storing your information securely so there is no unauthorised access or misuse.