

1.0 Purpose

This policy sets out the guidelines for the setting of rent for Hume Community Housing’s social housing properties, including general and transitional housing, Home Purchase Assistance Scheme (HPA) and crisis accommodation, in a fair and transparent manner.

2.0 Scope

1. This policy aligns to Hume’s purpose of Creating Opportunities for People to Prosper.
2. This policy covers all social housing properties where there is a Residential Tenancy Agreement in place.
3. This policy also covers properties managed under the Temporary Accommodation Program (crisis accommodation) where there is an Occupancy Agreement in place.
4. This policy excludes affordable housing and specialist disability accommodation.

3.0 References

3.1 This policy has been written with reference to the following:

- [Residential Tenancies Act 2010](#)
- [NSW Community Housing Rent Policy](#)
- Specific funding or management agreements for *Home Purchase Assistance Scheme (HPA)*
- Hume Strategic Plan
- Hume Values

3.2 The following are technical terms used within this policy that may require definition;

Customer/tenant is defined as the person or persons that signed the Residential Tenancy Agreement with Hume.

Household members are all people living in the accommodation, regardless of age or relationship.

Social Housing (General Social Housing) is subsidised long term rental accommodation for people on very low and low incomes, who are eligible for public housing (does use a residential tenancy agreement and is subject to the NSW Community Housing Rent Policy).

Transitional Housing is short term accommodation (generally from three to eighteen months) for people exiting or transitioning from crisis accommodation (does use a residential tenancy agreement and is subject to the NSW Community Housing Rent Policy).

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Crisis Accommodation is short term accommodation (generally three months or less) for people who are homeless or people who are at risk of homelessness (does not involve a residential tenancy agreement and is not subject to the NSW Community Housing Rent Policy).

Occupancy Agreements are used in crisis accommodation, specifically the *Temporary Accommodation Program*. An Occupancy Agreement is the agreement under which a person resides in refuge or crisis accommodation and is exempted from the operation of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 by virtue of Regulation 14 (is not subject to the NSW Community Housing Rent Policy).

Market Rent is usually the maximum rent a customer will pay for a Hume property. Hume establishes market rent by using rent data relevant to the type and location of the property, published quarterly in the Rent and Sales Report by DCJ.

Maximum Rent is the maximum weekly rent amount Hume will charge a customer.

Assessable Income is all monies received by the customer and all other household members for the calculation of rental subsidy. See [NSW Community Housing Rent Policy](#) for the current listing of assessable and non-assessable income.

Statutory Income are funds received, (or funds entitled to be received) by a person from Centrelink, Education and Youth Affairs, Department of Veteran Affairs or any other authority by meeting the required eligibility criteria.

Rent Subsidy or Rebate is calculated as the difference between the assessed rent a household will pay, based on household income, and the market rent payable for the property.

Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) is a non-taxable rent supplement paid through Centrelink to individuals and families who rent in the private rental market or in non-Government authority housing.

Pre-approved Period – Commitments to Social Housing Management Transfer (SHMT) Customers which are live at the point of transfer which relate to rent need to be preserved for the pre-approved period. Customers on a subsidised rent need to have that honoured until its review date. Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) Customers rent charges are adapted to include CRA until a new subsidy is assessed.

Multiple Consent and Authority can be provided by the customer and gives Hume permission to:

- Electronically access Centrelink Income Statements
- Advise Centrelink of new rent amounts for the purpose of adjusting the customers and their respective household members' Commonwealth Rent Assistance
- Update payments made to Hume through Centrepay

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4.0 Policy

4.1 Market Rent

The market rent is shown on the Residential Tenancy Agreement signed by the customer at the commencement of their tenancy.

4.1.1 Establishing Market Rent

1. Market rent is the maximum rent payable for each property.
2. Hume establishes market rent for capital properties by using rent data relevant to the type and location of the property published quarterly in the Rent and Sales Report by the Department of Communities and Justice.
3. Market rent for leasehold properties is the amount set by the owner/agent of the property.

4.1.2 Reviewing Market Rent

1. Market rent reviews are conducted annually on all capital properties.
2. Market rents for leasehold properties are reviewed and updated when the actual rent for the property changes as notified by the owner/agent of the property.
3. For customers on periodic or continuous leases - the results of these market rent reviews are passed onto customers in accordance with statutory notification periods.
4. Market rent reviews are applied to Transitional Housing properties, where customers are in fixed term leases, when the property is vacant.

4.2 Maximum Rent

For most social housing customers, the maximum rent payable is 100% of the market rent.

Some properties have a maximum rent which is less than the market rent. The maximum rent payable is the lower value of the market rent or 74.9% of the Australian Tax Office (ATO) benchmark market value.

In setting maximum rent Hume relies on the ATO transitional benchmark market valuation methodology for properties acquired prior to 1 January 2019. For properties acquired after 1 January 2019 Hume complies with the detailed benchmark market values.

4.3 Rent Subsidy Assessments

Customers can apply for a rent subsidy by completing a [Rent Subsidy Application](#) and providing current income details for every household member over 18 years of age.

Rent subsidies must comply with the current funding guidelines for each housing program and the [NSW Community Housing Rent Policy](#). The percentage charged varies according to the housing program and the household composition. Rent subsidies are capped at the maximum/market rent for the property.

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As a rent subsidy is based on the household income, customers must advise Hume of any change in their income and/or household circumstance within 21 days of the effect of that change. See 4.6.2 Change in Circumstances.

4.3.1 Social Housing Programs (excluding HPA)

The following table shows the percentage of income payable by different members of a household:

Table 1: Social Housing - Percentage of Income Payable as Rent by Household Members

| INCOME | RATE |
|---|------|
| The customer, their spouse or live-in partner, irrespective of their age | 25% |
| All other persons living in the household who are aged 21 years or over | 25% |
| People living in the household aged 18 – 20 years inclusive who are not the customer, their spouse or live-in partner | 15% |
| Family Tax Benefit Part A & B | 15% |
| Other Household Members under 18 years who are not the tenant, their spouse or live in partner | Nil |
| Commonwealth Rent Assistance | 100% |

Commonwealth Rental Assistance is assessed and maximised at 100%.

Hume will calculate the amount of Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) that the household is expected to receive based on the rent to be charged to the customer.

The final subsidised rent will include the household contribution, based on household income, plus the full amount (100%) of Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

If the calculation by Hume varies from Centrelink’s assessment, Hume will ask the customer to provide documentation from Centrelink showing the actual amount received. Hume will review the documents provided and the calculation and will advise the customer of the outcome of the review.

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4.3.2 Home Purchase Assistance Scheme

The Home Purchase Assistance Scheme (HPA) has different assessment rates than those listed above. Refer to Appendix 1 for the assessment rates for HPA.

Other than different assessment rates, rent assessments and reviews for this program are completed in accordance with this policy.

4.3.3 Temporary Accommodation Program (crisis accommodation)

TAP customers are not subject to the NSW Community Housing Rent Policy.

Occupancy fees are calculated in place of rent and are fixed based on customer’s Centrelink income and household compliment.

Refer to Appendix 2 for all information relating to the Temporary Accommodation Program.

4.3.4 Proof of Income

When applying for a rent subsidy a customer must declare all assessable income and provide proof of the amount received for themselves, their spouse/live in partner (even if they are under 18 years of age) and for other household members aged 18 years and over.

Proof of income must be original. A guide to acceptable proof of income is set out in Appendix 3.

4.3.5 Income from Wages

Full time, part time and casual employees are required to provide documentation showing gross earnings and deductions covering a period of 12 weeks. Overtime payments are included as part of the customer or household member’s income.

Income will usually be averaged over a 12 week period or, for new employment of less than 12 weeks, over the period since commencement of the employment.

If the customers or household member’s rent is calculated to be less than the rent based on the relevant statutory income, please refer to 4.3.8.

4.3.6 Self Employed

The assessable income of self-employed customers and household members is determined by taking the gross income less the business deductions allowable for community rent setting purposes. Refer to the [NSW Community Housing Rent Policy](#) for more information.

If the customers or household member’s rent is calculated to be less than the rent based on the relevant statutory income, please refer to 4.3.8.

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4.3.7 No Income or Reduced Statutory Income

In some instances, a customer or household member receives no statutory income, or a reduced statutory income, because they:

1. Have chosen not to apply for an income to which they are entitled
2. Are not eligible to receive a statutory income because:
 - o They have gone overseas
 - o They receive a Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance, have not sought work and have become ineligible for further payments for a specified period
 - o They have received a compensation or other lump sum payment, or Centrelink deems them to have sufficient resources, and Centrelink expects them to use those resources for living expenses
3. Have breached Centrelink requirements or are repaying a Centrelink debt.

In these situations Hume has the right to reject an application for a rental subsidy if the customer or household member does not have income continually for a period of 12 months. Market rent will be charged for the household until such time as income can be verified. Please refer to 4.3.8.

4.3.8 Assessing a Reduced Statutory Income

Hume will assess people who receive an income that is less than the Newstart Allowance (or other benefit to which they would otherwise be entitled), as though they receive the appropriate statutory benefit (including 100% CRA entitlement) for their age and household composition. This includes people with no income, people who receive wages or salaries and those who are self-employed (refer to 4.3.5 to 4.3.7).

In exceptional cases of severe financial hardship, a minimum rent of \$20 for each household member can be charged. Such decisions must be approved by the Manager, Customer Accounts or the Executive, Customer Experience.

4.3.9 Assessing Sponsored Migrants and New Zealand citizens who are in Australia on a non-protected Special Category Visa (NPSCV)

Hume will assess sponsored migrants and New Zealand citizens on a NPSCV who do not receive any income (or their income is below statutory Centrelink rates) as though they receive the appropriate statutory benefit for their age and household composition. Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) will only be included in the calculation if the person is the customer or partner of the customer.

In exceptional cases of severe financial hardship a minimum rent of \$20 will be charged. Such decisions must be approved by the Manager, Customer Accounts or the Executive, Customer Experience.

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4.3.10 Assessing other Newly Arrived Residents

Hume will require a copy of the household members visa. If the household member is ineligible for Centrelink payments, has no income, but has no work restrictions, Hume will assess their rent as though they receive the appropriate statutory benefit for their age and household composition. CRA will not be included in the calculation. If the household member has work restrictions, their rent will be assessed based on their income (eg Foreign Pension or income from savings) or if no income the \$20 minimum rent will apply. The minimum rent will apply for a maximum period of 24 months. Thereafter, the household member will be assessed in accordance with 4.3.9.

In exceptional cases of severe financial hardship a minimum rent of \$20 will be charged for those with no work restrictions. Such decisions must be approved by the Manager, Customer Accounts or the Executive, Customer Experience.

4.3.11 Assessing couples who are living apart

Where a customer or household member is receiving the couple rate of pension and has been able to demonstrate good reason why they are living separately from their partner, but not permanently separated, Hume may assess them based on the couple rate of pension with CRA category One of a couple temp. sep., no dep. Children or One of a couple sep. due to illness, no dep. Children.

4.3.12 Fluctuations in Income

Where a customer or household member's income varies, and it is not considered feasible to consistently change the customer or household member's rent assessment, it is possible to average the income over a 3 to 12 month period for the purposes of rent assessment.

4.3.13 Special Conditions under the Social Housing Management Transfer Program

Customers who transfer to Hume under the Social Housing Management Transfer Program will not see any immediate changes to their income after rent, except that they will pay rent including Commonwealth Rent Assistance to Hume following the transfer.

Customers on a subsidised rent will have their rent (net of CRA) honoured until their next review date.

Three additional DCJ policies must be honoured by Hume until the end of the pre- approved period for that individual tenancy. These are:

- \$5 rent abatement
- Start Work Bonus, Tenant Employment Incentive Scheme
- Absence from dwelling

Refer to Appendix 4 for more information.

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4.3.14 Applying a Vacant Bedroom Charge (VBC) – Social Housing Management Transfer Customers only

This clause applies only to customers who transfer to Hume under the Social Housing Management Transfer Program. This clause will be applied by Hume if the VBC was in place at the point of transfer.

Customers are charged a VBC by DCJ:

1. When a customer requests a transfer due to under-occupancy and refuses two reasonable offers of alternative social housing or,
2. When Hume approaches a customer to move due to under-occupancy and they refuse outright to relocate or refuse two reasonable offers of alternative social housing.

Hume will continue to charge the VBC until the end of the customers lease or until the customer moves to a smaller dwelling which means they no longer have to pay this under the DCJ policy.

Where this clause is applicable Hume will apply the VBC to the tenancy by adjusting the customer’s rent subsidy. As a result the subsidised rent the customer pays will increase by:

- \$20 a week per household for one person aged 16 years and over; or
- \$30 a week per household for two or more people aged 16 years and over.

4.4 Informing New Customers about Rent Setting Policies

- i. Hume will verbally inform all new customers of the relevant rent setting policy at the time of offer of a property.
- ii. At the time of sign up Hume will provide information in writing regarding the rent review process and customers will be advised of their obligation to inform Hume within 21 days of any changes in their circumstances.

4.5 Rent Payment

4.5.1 Rent Payment at Commencement of Tenancy

At the commencement of a new tenancy, the rent payment process will be explained to the Customer. Customers will be required to pay two weeks rent in advance at the time of signing their Tenancy Agreement together with bond as per Hume’s Bond policy.

The rent may be paid weekly or fortnightly and it is the Customer’s responsibility and obligation to ensure that rent is paid in advance in accordance with the Residential Tenancy Agreement.

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4.5.2 Rent Payment Options

Rent can be paid using the following methods:

- Centrepay deduction direct from the customer’s pension or benefit,
- BPAY using their unique BPAY Biller Code and Reference
- Direct Deposit
- At the bank
- Internet Banking
- EFTPOS at any of the Hume’s offices
- EFTPOS over the phone

4.5.3 Centrepay Deductions and varying payments

Customers can provide a Multiple Consent and Authority which gives Hume permission to vary a Customers Centrepay deduction amount when the rent changes ensuring that rent payments are kept current.

4.6 Rent Subsidy Reviews

Rent subsidy reviews can be initiated by Hume or by the customer.

4.6.1 Rent Review initiated by Hume

In accordance with the [NSW Community Housing Rent Policy](#) Hume will review the level of rent paid by a customer at least every six months.

Customers will be notified in writing when Hume is commencing an income and rent subsidy review.

Customers will be given 21 days to submit a completed Rent Subsidy Application and provide acceptable proof of income for all household members.

If a Rent Subsidy Application and acceptable proof of income is not received within 21 days market rent will be charged with an effective date of the rent change date advised in the Notice of Rent Review communication. The market rent will be effective until the next Hume initiated rent review or the customer requests a new rent assessment and submits a completed Rental Subsidy Application.

During rent review Hume aims to complete rent subsidy assessments within 28 days of receiving the relevant documentation.

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4.6.2 Change in Circumstances

Outside the regular rent subsidy reviews social housing customers may choose to apply for Rent Subsidy Review by completing a [Rent Subsidy Application](#) and providing the current income details for every household member.

Customers who receive a rent subsidy must advise Hume of any change in their income and/or household circumstance within 21 days of the effect of that change - see 4.6.4 for more information about Change in Circumstances.

Hume will complete a rent subsidy assessment within 10 working days of receiving the relevant documentation.

Where a Customer does not provide all of the supporting income information for all household members with 28 days of the initial application the rent subsidy will be cancelled and maximum rent will be charged. The Customer will be notified in writing allowing 2 weeks notice from the date of the letter.

4.6.3 Effective dates for rent changes

| | <u>Rent Subsidy Review Outcome</u> | | <u>Rent Effective Date</u> |
|---|------------------------------------|--|---|
| Hume initiated Rent Subsidy Review | Increase in Rent | No change in circumstances - see 4.6.4 | Rent increase will take effect as advised in initial correspondence issued to customer |
| | | Change in circumstances - see 4.6.4 | Rent increase will take effect 28 days after the date of the increase in assessable income and will be backdated |
| | Decrease in Rent | No change in circumstances - see 4.6.4 | Rent decrease will take effect from the notification date |
| | | Change in circumstances - see 4.6.4 | Rent decrease will take effect from the date of the income decrease, backdated to a maximum of 3 months from the date of receipt of the completed Rent Subsidy Application . Where the date of decrease cannot be established the decrease will take effect from the notification date. |
| | No Response to Rent Review | | Rent increase to Market Rent will take effect as advised in initial correspondence issued to customer |
| | Late Response to Rent Review | | Rent increases and decreases will be applied in accordance with the above |

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| Change in Household Income – Customer initiated Rent Subsidy Review | Increase in Rent | Hume advised within 21 days of effect of change | Rent change will take effect the next Monday after the rent subsidy assessment is completed or 28 days after the date of the increase in assessable income (whichever is later) |
| | | Hume not advised within 21 days of effect of change | Rent change will take effect 28 days after the date of the increase in assessable income and will be backdated |
| | Decrease in Rent | Hume advised within 21 days of effect of change | Rent change will take effect from the date of the income change |
| | | Hume not advised within 21 days of effect of change | Rent decrease will take effect from the date of the income decrease, backdated to a maximum of 3 months from the date of receipt of the completed <u>Rent Subsidy Application</u> . Where the date of decrease cannot be established the decrease will take effect from the notification date. |

If the rent subsidy review reveals that a customer’s household income has increased by more than 10% and the customer has failed to notify Hume within 21 days of that change Hume reserves the right to cancel the current rent subsidy and backdate the cancellation of the rental subsidy to the date of income change.

Where a customer’s household income has decreased, but the customer does not inform Hume of the change in circumstance within 3 months of the date of change due to hardship or customers incapacity but later provides income documents which evidence the date of decrease, the effective date of decrease may be adjusted to the date the decrease in income occurred.

Where a customer’s rent subsidy is cancelled because they did not respond to a Hume initiated rent review, and they do not respond for a further 3 months due to exceptional circumstances, Hume will review the customer profile and history prior to making a decision regarding the backdate date. If the customer would have been entitled to a rent subsidy for the period of cancellation and there is evidence of exceptional circumstances the effective date of decrease may be adjusted to the date the decrease in income occurred.

Such cases can be advocated for by any officer at Hume and the decision must be approved by the Manager, Customer Accounts or the Executive, Customer Experience.

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4.6.4 Change in Circumstances

For the purposes of rent subsidy reviews, Change in Circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- An adult household member moves into or out of the property
- The Customer or a household member stops or start works
- A substantial change in a customer or household members income from employment - usually defined as at least a 10% change
- A substantial change in a customer or household members Centrelink income. For example, payments change from Newstart to Carer Payment, or from Youth Allowance to Parenting Payment
- Additional income being received from sources, other than those previously declared, resulting in an increase in the total assessable household income that could not be considered in line with inflation

The following circumstances are not normally considered a Change in Circumstances for the purpose of rent subsidy reviews:

- Inflationary adjustments made by Centrelink to a Customer or household member’s pension or benefit
- Adjustments made by Centrelink to a household member’s benefit as a result of additional children being born
- Inflationary or usual wage increases received by a household member – usually less than 10%
- A household member has had no real increase in income, however the assessable household income has increased as a result of Hume’s Rent Policy. For example:
 - a household member turning 18 but still receiving the same amount of income
 - a household member turning 21 and the assessment rate changing from 15% to 25%

4.7 Rent during approved absences

4.7.1 Approved Absences

Customers must continue to pay their current rent during any period of absence from the property.

A customer may apply for a reduction in rent for a maximum of 3 months if they or another household member are:

- a. A sole occupant in a nursing home,
- b. Undertaking rehabilitation,

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- c. In hospital for long term care,
- d. In respite care,
- e. In prison, or
- f. In a refuge or alternative accommodation due to escaping domestic violence or being at risk.

In exceptional circumstances this may be extended to a maximum of 6 months. This application has to be supported by documented evidence from the relevant authority and must be approved by the relevant senior manager or the Chief Operating Officer.

4.7.2 Requirements for Rent Reduction

Customers and household members will only be eligible for a reduction in rent if there are additional costs to the household or a reduction of income for the household during the period of absence.

Customers must provide all evidence supporting any additional costs such as accommodation costs or reduction in income, including the commencement and end dates for the temporary absence.

The rent charged to the household member for the approved absence will be \$20.00. Where the customer is in prison and does not receive any income the rent charged will be \$5.00.

If there are other household members in the property during the absence, their income will continue to be included in the rent calculation.

The minimum rent does not apply to customers/household members who are absent for other reasons such as holidays, caring for relatives overseas or assisting with immigration matters in their home country.

4.8 Customer Notifications- Market Rent Increase

In accordance with the [Residential Tenancy Act 2010](#), the customer will be informed in writing at least 60 days prior to any market rent increase.

Customers are advised in writing when Hume is commencing a rent subsidy review. Customers will be given 21 days to submit a completed [Rent Subsidy Application](#) and acceptable proof of income to support eligibility.

Customers will be notified in writing of any changes in their assessed rent and such notification will include a copy of the rent assessment. Where there is a rent increase, and particularly where the rent subsidy is cancelled, Hume will ensure that any action taken does not conflict with the [Residential Tenancy Act 2010](#).

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5.0 Appeals Processes

5.1 Rent Subsidy Assessment Appeals to Hume

If a customer does not agree with the rent subsidy assessment an appeal for a review of the assessment can be made. The appeal will be managed in accordance with Hume’s [Policy – Compliment’s, Complaints and Appeals](#)

5.2 External Appeals

If not satisfied with the results of a rent subsidy appeal, the customer may lodge an appeal regarding eligibility for subsidised rent with the [Housing Appeals Committee \(HAC\)](#).

Appeals regarding market rent can be lodged with the [NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal \(NCAT\)](#).

6.0 Audit Processes

Each employee that conducts a rental assessment will be appropriately trained having completed the most up to date training available on the current policy, process and systems.

Regular quality control audits will be conducted by the Customer Accounts Team and the report presented to the Executive, Customer Experience.

Internal annual audits will be conducted on a random sample of rent assessments by the Risk and Compliance Team and an audit report documenting findings and improvement opportunities presented to the Executive, Customer Experience.

7.0 Peer and Legal Review

Significant updates to this policy require review by peers association and/or legal advice to ensure the policy is in line with current legislation, housing guidelines and best practice. This policy has been reviewed by both peers associations and legal bodies.

8.0 Responsibilities

- 8.1 Board is authorised to approve this policy
- 8.2 Managers are responsible to ensure that all employees comply with this Policy
- 8.3 Employees are responsible to ensure that they comply with Policy
- 8.4 The Senior Manager, Legal, Risk & Compliance is responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed as per the Policy and Procedure Review Schedule.

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9.0 Summary of Changes

| Version Nr. | Date: | Details of Changes |
|-------------|------------------|--|
| 001 | 01/01/2008 | Initial Issue |
| 002 | 25/11/2008 | Update from HCHA Rent policy 2008 Introduction of CRA MAX |
| 003 | 01/07/2009 | Update from HCHA Rent policy |
| 004 | 04/04/2010 | Update from HCHC rent policy 2009 Affordable housing; Workers compensation |
| 005 | March 2011 | Reviewed market rent definition |
| 006 | 17 November 2013 | Full Policy review for simplification, Introduction of Maximum rent, Removal of Ceiling Rent, Added Sustaining the Tenancy, Rent Payment Options, hyperlinks to source reference documents |
| 007 | 29 July 2017 | Minimum rent increased to \$20.00, removed Affordable Housing Rent, reviewed rent effective dates, clarification on dealing with special circumstances |
| 008 | | Removed SHSP. Reviewed rent effective dates. Updates to assessment of no income or reduced statutory income including treatment of people on certain types of visa |
| 009 | 15 February 2020 | Full policy review, introducing ATO transitional benchmark market valuation methodology |

Appendix 1: Determining subsidised rent in Home Purchase Assistance Scheme

Appendix 2: Setting Occupancy Fees for the Temporary Accommodation Program

Appendix 3: Proof of Income

Appendix 4: Special Conditions for Social Housing Management Transfer Customers

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Appendix 1:

Determining subsidised rent in Home Purchase Assistance Scheme

Home Purchase Assistance Scheme is subject to specific rent setting guidelines.

The following table shows the percentage of income payable by different members of a household:

Percentage of Income Payable as Rent by Household Members

| INCOME | RATE |
|---|-------|
| The customer, their spouse or live-in partner, irrespective of their age | 25% |
| All other persons living in the household who are aged 25 years or over | 25% |
| People living in the household aged 21 – 24 years inclusive who are not the customer, their spouse or live-in partner | 20% |
| People living in the household aged 18 – 20 years inclusive who are not the customer, their spouse or live-in partner | 12.5% |
| Family Tax Benefit Part A & B | 11% |
| Other Household Members under 18 years who are not the tenant, their spouse or live in partner | Nil |
| Commonwealth Rent Assistance | 25% |

Commonwealth Rent Assistance is assessed and maximised at 25%.

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Appendix 2:

Setting Occupancy Fees for the Temporary Accommodation Program (TAP)

The Temporary Accommodation Program (TAP) is crisis accommodation and is managed in partnership with the Department of Family and Community Services.

Customers are placed on occupancy agreements. An Occupancy Agreement is the agreement under which a person resides in refuge or crisis accommodation and is exempted from the operation of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 - Regulation 14.

TAP customers are not subject to the NSW Community Housing Rent Policy.

Occupancy fees are calculated in place of rent and are fixed based on customer's Centrelink income and household compliment.

Occupancy fees and the maximum charge are set by the Department of Family and Community Services and Hume. The rates are reviewed regularly by DCJ and Hume. The rates stated below are effective 31 January 2019.

Occupancy Fees per week

Maximum Charge:

- Single Accommodation \$435
- Family Accommodation \$490

| Single – no children | |
|----------------------|-------|
| Youth Allowance | \$75 |
| Newstart | \$95 |
| Pension | \$145 |

| Single – with children | | *Plus \$30 for each child under 18 |
|------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|
| Newstart | \$100 | |
| Parenting Payment | \$130 | |
| Pension | \$145 | |

| Couple – with children | | *Plus \$30 for each child under 18 |
|------------------------|------|------------------------------------|
| Newstart | \$85 | |

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| | |
|-------------------|-------|
| Parenting Payment | \$85 |
| Pension | \$110 |

A couple will pay individually according to their income. For example:

- A couple each in receipt of Newstart will pay 2 x\$85 plus \$30 for each child under 18.
- A couple - 1 on Newstart, 1 on Parenting Payment will pay 2x\$85 plus \$30 for each child.
- If 1 is in receipt of Newstart and the other DSP - they will pay \$85 + \$110 plus \$30 for each additional child under 18

Assessing Wages

25% of GROSS income is assessed. If the customer receives wages and Centrelink Income, just assess as per Centrelink payments.

NB: For additional household or family members over 18 refer to the rates for “single – no children”

Reviewing Market Rent for Temporary Accommodation Program

Market rent is the maximum occupancy charge for TAP dwellings. This is reviewed annually by the TAP team.

As TAP customers sign an Occupancy Agreement the program is exempted from the operation of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 - Regulation 14.

Market rent does not have any implications on the customer in the property and there is no requirement to serve statutory notices to customers residing in TAP properties.

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Appendix 3:

Proof of Income

Each customer is responsible for collecting the income details of all household members and providing these details to Hume so that their rent can be assessed.

When applying for a rent subsidy a customer must declare all assessable income and provide proof of the amount received for themselves, their spouse/live in partner (even if they are under 18 years of age) and for other household members aged 18 years and over.

Proof of income must be original.

| Source of Income | Proof of Income |
|------------------------------|---|
| Centrelink | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided through the Income Confirmation Scheme for Centrelink pensions and allowances • An Income Statement from Centrelink |
| Veterans' Affairs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A General Statement of Pension and a Statement of Income and Assets from the Department of Veteran's Affairs |
| Salary/Wages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A payslip, letter or statement from the employer detailing gross wage, applicable tax, deductions, pay period, and payee details for salary or wages for previous 12 weeks. |
| Self Employed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A completed Australian Tax Office Return or a certified profit and loss statement completed by a registered accountant |
| Superannuation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A letter from the Superannuation Fund confirming the amount received |
| Overseas pension | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A letter or statement from an Overseas Government detailing the amount received |
| Savings / Investments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A letter from the investment institution providing details of interest or dividend received |
| Maintenance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An itemised Centrelink Income Statement or letter from Child Support Agency |
| WorkCover | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A letter or statement from WorkCover or Insurance Company detailing the amount received |
| Other Income | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A letter from another organisation or income provider (not listed above) detailing the amount and type of income received |
| No Income | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of the visa • A statutory declaration stating why no income • Copies of last 6 months of all bank statements |

The type of evidence provided must correspond to the type of income received. For example if a customer or household member receives a Centrelink payment, a Centrelink statement must be provided. Separate evidence must be provided for all type of income received.

Documents must not be more than one month old (unless otherwise requested) on the date they are submitted, with the exception of Tax Returns, which must not be more than 13 months old.

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Appendix 4:

Special Conditions for Social Housing Management Transfer Customers

Transferring customers will retain 6 DCJ pre-approved conditions outlined below until either the end of the customers lease and/or the end of the pre-approved period for that policy, whichever is applicable.

The below 2 policies are the DCJ Housing policies to be honoured by Hume until the end of the tenant’s lease:

| DCJ Policy/ Practice | Description | CHP requirement in relation to transferred |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Types and Length of Lease Policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The type and length of lease that reflects a client’s need and circumstances. Most new tenancy agreements will be for a period of twelve month probationary, two, five or ten years. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Government commitment, the tenants will not see any changes to their lease as they are transitioning to the CHPs on a concurrent lease. |
| 2. Managing Under-occupancy and the Vacant Bedroom Charge (VBC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenants are charged a VBC by DCJ if they have refused to relocate or have rejected 2 reasonable offers of alternative housing on under-occupancy grounds. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The VBC should be charged by the CHP until the end of the lease or until the tenant moves to a smaller dwelling which means they no longer have to pay this under the DCJ policy. CHPs are encouraged to introduce the VBC where they do not do so now. |

The below 4 policies are the DCJ Housing policies to be honoured by the Hume until the end of the pre-approved period for that policy:

| DCJ Policy/ Practice | Description | CHP requirement in relation to transferred |
|---|---|---|
| 3. \$5 Rent Abatement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenants or household member’s payable rent is \$5, where tenants are in prison, nursing home, rehabilitation, respite care or a refuge after leaving domestic violence, due to their immigration status, no Centrelink or other income as spouse or partner earns too much. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a transfer tenant has been pre-approved by DCJ for either one of these 3 policies then the CHPs must temporarily accept the policy until the end of the pre-approved period for that individual tenancy. |
| 4. Start Work Bonus, Tenant Employment Incentive Scheme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers tenants a grace period of up to 26 weeks within a financial year before adjusting their rent subsidy, in order to incentivise work participation. | |

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| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>5. Absence from dwelling</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenants need to obtain approval from DCJ to be away from their home for more than six weeks. • DCJ may approve acceptable absences for up to six months for example: hospitalisation, respite care/nursing home, rehabilitation, custody, caring for a sick relative. Subsequently, in some of these circumstances if approved for this policy, the tenant will be eligible for the \$5 rent abatement as well. • The tenant may apply for an approval to extend the absence beyond six months where there are unusual circumstances | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of the pre-approved period the CHP may then apply their own policy/ practice for further assessing the client's needs. |
| <p>6. Tenancy Charges and Policy Supplement</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCJ uses various assessment rules to determine if a tenant is eligible for a rent subsidy by considering their household's income, size and age. • In some cases, tenants do not pay the standard 25% and 30% of their household income towards rent for example: the pensioner supplement is not currently assessed; and Family Tax Benefit B is currently assessed at a lower level. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenants will not see any changes to their income after rent and water, except that they will pay rent and Commonwealth Rent Assistance to their new CHP following the transfer. • Commitments to tenants which are live at the point of transfer which relate to rent or water charges need to be preserved. Tenants on a rebated rent need to have that honoured until its review date. • CHPs must adapt the DCJ tenants rent and water charges until a new subsidy is assessed. • CHPs will not be able to vary these until the client's income changes and a new subsidy is assessed. • The concessions in this table need to be applied/ accepted by CHPs for the duration for which the concession is originally approved by DCJ. |

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