



## What is Community Housing? – important information from Housing ACT

### What is community housing?

Community Housing is one type of Social Housing (alongside Public Housing and Affordable Housing). It is long-term rental accommodation provided by not-for-profit community organisations. Community Housing organisations receive assistance from Government in the form of grants, loans, dwellings, or current operational funding.

### What do community housing and public housing have in common?

- Community housing and public housing are forms of social housing assistance for eligible applicants. They both offer long-term rental housing for people on low to moderate incomes with a housing need.
- Public housing tenants and community housing tenants have the same rights under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*.
- Both community housing and public housing tenants have appeal rights. When a public housing tenant is affected by a decision made by Housing ACT they can appeal to Housing ACT. When a community housing tenant is affected by a decision made by the community housing organisation they can appeal to the organisation.

### What are the differences between community housing and public housing?

- Community housing is delivered by community organisations. If you accept an offer of community housing, your tenancy will be managed by a community housing organisation.
- Public housing is delivered by Housing ACT. If you accept an offer of public housing, your tenancy will be managed by Housing ACT.
- Community housing organisations may charge tenants a rental bond. Rental bonds are not required in public housing. Housing ACT may be able to provide a bond loan to assist with access to community housing (see the 'Rental Bond Loans' Fact Sheet for more information).



- If eligible, some community housing organisations may require tenants to pay an amount equivalent to 100% of any Commonwealth Rent Assistance entitlement. Contact the community housing organisations directly for more information.
- Some community housing organisations also offer group share options, where tenants have their own bedroom but other facilities (such as the bathroom, kitchen and laundry) may be shared. See the individual Fact Sheets for more information.
- Some community housing organisations also offer 'Affordable Housing' where rent is calculated at 74.9% of market rent (rather than 25% percent of assessable income). See the individual Fact Sheets for more information.
- Housing ACT requires community housing organisations to meet certain standards for housing provision and assistance. These standards are set out in funding contracts, through the Housing Assistance Act 2007 and the National Regulatory System for Community Housing.

## How many community housing organisations are there?

Five community housing organisations that provide long-term housing report to the ACT Government. These are:

- Argyle Community Housing [\[HTML\]](#) [\[PDF 590KB\]](#)
- Environmental Collective Housing Organisation (ECHO) [\[HTML\]](#) [\[PDF 529KB\]](#)
- Havelock Housing Association (HHA) [\[HTML\]](#) [\[PDF 541KB\]](#)
- Salvos Housing [\[HTML\]](#) [\[PDF 556KB\]](#) and
- Tamil Senior Citizens Association [\[HTML\]](#) [\[PDF 520KB\]](#)

The Fact Sheets on each of the community housing organisations are included in the Application Kit for Social Housing Assistance.





Some other community organisations, which offer a range of support services, are also registered as community housing providers of short or long-term supported accommodation.

## How do I apply for community housing?

You can apply for community housing by completing an Application for Social Housing Assistance form. On the form you will be asked to choose whether you wish to apply for community housing, public housing or affordable housing. You are able to apply for all three if you wish.

Application forms are available from Gateway Services, the Housing and Community Services website (<http://www.act.gov.au/hcs>) or the community housing organisations. See the 'Registering for Social Housing Assistance' [Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

## Why should I apply for both public housing and community housing on the Application for Social Housing Assistance form?

Applying for both community housing and public housing means you will be registered for both on the Social Housing Register managed by Housing ACT.

However, there are always more people wanting public and community housing than there is housing available. All people, once registered, go on the Social Housing Register and are allocated housing assistance on a needs basis and suitability to available properties.

## What are the benefits of applying to a community housing provider?

The diversity of Community Housing Providers in the ACT reflects the range of individual household needs across the ACT community and is in keeping with one of the primary benefits of community housing – to provide for a diverse choice of housing options reflecting differing needs and preferences of clients. Community Housing Providers can provide personalised service assisting clients with issues relating to your tenancy.



## How much rent will I pay?

Most tenants of community housing pay similar rents to public housing tenants (25% of a household's assessable income) or the market rent for that particular property, whichever is lower. Market rent is the amount of rent a household in the private rental market would expect to pay for a similar property in the area. Some community housing tenants pay a maximum of 74.9% of market rent.

Rent is payable two weeks in advance.

## Can I get involved?

Community housing organisations often encourage tenant participation in their organisation. For example, some organisations invite tenants to sit on their management boards or management committees. This helps the community housing organisation to deliver the right services that meet the needs of tenants and communities.

Many community housing organisations also provide opportunities for participation in social events.

## Further Information

For more information telephone Housing ACT on 133 427 or you may wish to contact the relevant community housing organisation directly. See the links to the Fact Sheets above.

**You can also visit Gateway Services which is located at:**

Nature Conservation House  
Cnr Emu Bank & Benjamin Way  
Belconnen Town Centre  
(Open 9:00am to 5:00pm Mon to Fri)

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