

# Hunter Community Housing - Rent Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This policy provides information about how rent is calculated and the six-monthly periodic rent review process for social housing properties is managed by Hunter Community Housing.

## Section 2 - Scope

(2) This policy applies to setting rent for tenants living in community housing managed by Hunter Community Housing.

(3) This policy does not apply to housing managed by HCH through the market program. Refer to the Hunter Community Housing - Market Program Policy.

## Section 3 - Policy Statement

(4) Hunter Community Housing will apply a consistent and transparent rent setting approach which aims to ensure affordable outcomes for tenants and comply with contractual obligations for setting rents.

(5) For community housing programs that are governed by a contract between Hunter Community Housing and the NSW state government, Hunter Community Housing sets rent in accordance with the [NSW Community Housing Rent Policy](#) published by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

(6) For affordable housing programs that are governed by a contract between Hunter Community Housing and the NSW state government, Hunter Community Housing sets rent in accordance with the [NSW Affordable Housing Guidelines](#).

(7) For tenants with disabilities in supported independent living or specialist disability accommodation rent is set in accordance with guidelines issued under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), where applicable.

(8) For other housing programs that are governed by a contract between Hunter Community Housing and government such as the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS), Hunter Community Housing will set rents in accordance with relevant legislation.

(9) Hunter Community Housing aims to manage housing that is affordable and sets rents at no less than 25% of gross household income plus any Commonwealth Rent Assistance a tenant is eligible for up to a maximum level no higher than the market rent applied to a property.

## Section 4 - Principles

(10) Tenants will be informed about housing assistance eligibility and special conditions applicable to their tenancy at the time an offer of housing assistance is made.

(11) Tenants will be informed about how their rent is calculated, how to make rent payments and the rent review process at the time they sign an agreement with Hunter Community Housing.

(12) A tenant must pay the rent under their residential tenancy agreement.

(13) Hunter Community Housing will:

- a. not require a tenant to pay more than 2 weeks rent in advance under a residential tenancy agreement;
- b. not knowingly appropriate rent paid by the tenant for the purpose of any amount payable by the tenant other than rent;
- c. apply rent increases in accordance with the residential tenancy agreement and [Residential Tenancy Act 2010 \(NSW\)](#); and
- d. provide tenants with the required notice prior to applying a rent increase.

(14) Tenants receiving rent subsidies must inform Hunter Community Housing of changes to their income and other circumstances as soon as practical after the change has occurred. Rent subsidy fraud occurs when a tenant has made a false representation of facts about themselves or their household; whether by intentionally withholding information or providing misleading statements.

(15) Tenants experiencing difficulties with rent due to a change in circumstances may apply for hardship assistance.

## Section 5 - Appeals and Internal Review

(16) If a tenant or resident disagrees with a decision Hunter Community Housing has made in relation to their rent or eligibility for a rent subsidy they should firstly speak to Hunter Community Housing.

(17) If a tenant or a resident remains dissatisfied with a decision or outcome an appeal can be submitted in accordance with the [Hunter Community Housing - Appeals Policy](#).

## Section 6 - Responsibilities

(18) The General Operations Manager - Housing is responsible for implementation of this policy.

(19) Staff are responsible to ensure they have read, understood and comply with the policy.

(20) The Diocese Governance Department is responsible for managing the review process and publication of this policy.

## Section 7 - Document Review

(21) This policy will be reviewed when there is a legislative change, organisational change, delegations change or at least every 3 years to ensure it continues to be current and effective.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
<b>Effective Date</b>	20th May 2024
<b>Review Date</b>	21st May 2024
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Chief Operating Officer
<b>Approval Date</b>	24th June 2022
<b>Expiry Date</b>	26th May 2024
<b>Unit Head</b>	Lisa Tierney Chief Operating Officer
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Hunter Community Housing