

VCCH ELIGIBILITY AND ALLOCATIONS – RENT SETTING AND HARDSHIP PROCEDURE

Name of Procedure:	VCCH Eligibility and Allocations – Rent Setting and Hardship Procedure
Approval Authority:	Group CEO
Date effective:	6 February 2026
Due to be reviewed:	6 February 2029
Accountable Officer:	EGM Housing and Property Strategy
Responsible Officer:	Manager Housing
Procedure applies to:	VincentCare Community Housing

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this Procedure is to establish the approach of VincentCare Community Housing (VCCH) to setting rents in its long-term rental housing programs.

2. Scope

2.1 This Procedure applies to VincentCare Community Housing (VCCH).

2.2 This Procedure applies to long-term rental properties owned or managed by VCCH.

2.3 This Procedure does not apply to the following housing programs run by VCCH:

- a) Properties managed by VCCH under the Transitional Housing Program;
- b) Properties managed by VCCH under the Head Leasing Services Program;
- c) Temporary or crisis accommodation; and
- d) Any properties in other excluded housing programs.

2.4 The term 'renter' is inclusive of the term resident for the purpose of this policy.

3. Procedures

Principles

3.1 VincentCare Community Housing provides affordable rent to fulfil its social mission and to ensure that its housing relieves households from rental stress. As such, the following applies:

- a) The rent setting and review process is transparent, fair, promoted and consistently applied
- b) Charges to renters are compliant with all funding agreements and meet all State and Federal government requirements

- c) Rent charges are set at market rent then VCCH provides a subsidy based on household income so that rent is affordable in accordance with established affordability benchmarks
- d) Some flexibility is allowed to respond to individual hardship and change of circumstance
- e) In order to maintain financial stability, renters are required to have an income to remain eligible for VCCH housing
- f) The minimum rent chargeable will be equivalent to the rent for someone on JobSeeker Payment, even where actual income received is below this amount. In exceptional circumstances, e.g. where Youth Allowance is a household's main income, this rule may not apply.

Market Rent

- 3.2 To determine the rent that applies to a property, VCCH will generally carry out an independent open market rent valuation of all properties every three years.
- 3.3 VCCH may also adjust Property Rents based on a review of publicly available data on market rents for comparable properties. For properties owned by the Director of Housing and managed under a general lease, DFFH provides the market rent.
- 3.4 Market rent amounts will not exceed ATO benchmark rents.

Household rent/rental subsidy

- 3.5 VCCH applies the following approach to setting rent and determining rental subsidies: The rent payable after the subsidy is provided is determined as:

<p>Community Housing Program:</p> <p>These properties are long term social housing properties</p> <p>30% of gross assessable household income (for assessable household incomes)</p> <p>plus 15% family tax benefit (if applicable)</p> <p>plus 100% Commonwealth Rent Assistance (if applicable)</p> <p>plus, Additional Property Costs - if applicable</p> <p>= Rebated rent - VCCH caps the weekly rebated rent payment at 74.99% of the market rent</p> <p>= Total weekly rent payment</p>	<p>If household income changes during the tenancy the rental rebate is re-assessed.</p>
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Note: VCCH Community Housing Program properties that were tenanted prior to 1 March 2025 and are currently being charged at 25% of household income and 15% of Family Tax Benefits A and B and child maintenance will transfer to the higher rate (30%) as those properties become vacant and are re-tenanted. This will be effective as of the publication of this Policy.

- 3.6 Gross Household Income is determined in accordance with the DFFH Assessable Income guidelines

[Rent setting and rebate operational guideline assessable income - DFFH Service Providers](#)

Additional Property Costs

3.7 In several properties there are additional costs which are a condition of occupancy. These costs will vary depending on the service provided at the individual property. Additional property costs may include:

- a) Electricity
- b) Gas
- c) Water
- d) Cleaning
- e) Gardening
- f) Laundry facilities

Additional property costs are identified and specified at the time of setting total amount payable and are reviewed annually. They are calculated based on the actual aggregated cost of provision of the services to VCCH.

Provision of information about household income

3.8 Proof of income of all household members is required in order to calculate the rebate assessable amount. If a household does not provide proof of all income, no rebate can be calculated, and market rent will be charged.

3.9 Documentation covering all income over the twelve (12) week period prior to the rental agreement sign up/ income review is required. If a household member has an irregular income, the income should be assessed by averaging the income over the 12 weeks.

3.10 If a household member is eligible to receive a Centrelink payment, the rebate will be calculated as if that payment is being received, regardless of whether the household is receiving that income or not. Renters are encouraged to apply for all the payments they are entitled to.

3.11 If a renter's household income or family circumstances change at any time, the renter must advise VCCH and provide evidence of this change within 14 days. The household income will be re-assessed, and the rent subsidy will be recalculated.

Reviews of Rent Subsidy

3.12 VCCH will provide renters with a clear and transparent explanation as to how their rent subsidy has been calculated. Review of household incomes and rent subsidies are conducted every 12 months, when there is a change in household circumstances, or at renter request.

Hardship and Change of Circumstances

3.13 VCCH recognises that renters may experience changes in household circumstances that may lead to financial hardship. In circumstances of financial hardship, VCCH may provide a combination of financial and non-financial assistance to help renters in sustaining long-term tenancies.

3.14 Immediate (non-financial) support is provided through information and referral to culturally safe and appropriate support agencies and services including material aid and financial counselling.

3.15 Financial support will be provided in the form of a rental subsidy review, in line with this policy. Renters may request a rental review whenever their circumstances change.

4. Supporting Documentation

- 4.1 SVDPV Policies or Procedures that support the Procedure
- 4.2 External documents that support the Procedure

5. Legislative and Regulatory Obligations and Quality Alignment

- 5.1 This Procedure supports SVDPV's alignment with the following legislation or quality standards:
 - a) Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
 - b) Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)
 - c) Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)
 - d) Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies
 - e) Rainbow Tick Standards (3rd Edition)