

ELIGIBILITY FOR LONG-TERM HOUSING POLICY

1. Why we need this policy

- 1.1 Launch Housing is a registered Community Housing Provider, regulated by the Victorian Housing Registrar.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to detail the eligibility criteria for Launch Housing's long-term rental properties in order to fulfil its social mission, meet the terms and conditions of funding guidelines, and provide guidance to staff regarding the different eligibility requirements for the various types of subsidised housing that Launch Housing manages.

2. Who this policy applies to

- 2.1 This policy applies to renters in Long-Term properties owned or managed by Launch Housing.
- 2.2 This policy applies to Launch Housing staff managing these properties.

3. Which Launch Housing properties this policy apply to

- 3.1 This policy applies to all Long-Term rental properties owned or managed by Launch Housing.
- 3.2 This policy does not apply to the following housing programs managed by Launch Housing:
 - i. Transitional Housing managed under Launch Housing;
 - ii. Temporary or Crisis Supported Accommodation;
 - iii. Rental properties managed by HomeGround Real Estate;
 - iv. Properties managed by Launch Housing on behalf of other property owners where the owner retains responsibility for determining rent.

4. What this policy includes

4.1 Guiding principles

- 4.1.1 It is important that Launch Housing staff understand the different eligibility requirements of the different types of subsidised housing to:
 - i. Provide consistent and reliable information for prospective and incumbent renters; and
 - ii. Ensure Launch Housing's business practices comply with our funded contract obligations.
- 4.1.2 Launch Housing will:
 - i. Only allocate Long-Term housing to eligible applicants;
 - ii. Communicate clearly to applicants and the community as to who is eligible for Launch Housing's Long-Term housing;
 - iii. Comply with its contractual, legal, and regulatory obligations relating to eligibility for Long-Term housing.
 - iv. Accept that all with a current Victorian Housing Register (VHR) application will be taken by Launch Housing as having met the VHR eligibility criteria.
- 4.1.3 Victorian Housing Register (VHR) is a common register for all applicants for public housing and community housing in Victoria.
- 4.1.4 The VHR eligibility criteria apply to all Long-Term properties owned or managed by Launch Housing, other than those properties which Launch Housing and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) have agreed are outside the scope of the VHR.
- 4.1.5 DFFH has established common eligibility criteria for the VHR that are set out in the Eligibility Criteria Operational Guidelines: <http://www.housing.vic.gov.au/social-housing-eligibility>
- 4.1.6 Where Launch Housing owns or manages housing under programs that are outside the scope of the VHR, we will:

- i. Comply with any other legal or contractual obligations that apply to eligibility housing in that program;
- ii. Communicate clearly with applicants and stakeholders as to the particular eligibility criteria that apply to that program.

4.2 National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS)

- 4.2.1 To be eligible for an incentive under NRAS, owners must ensure that dwellings are rented to eligible renters. In managing NRAS, Launch Housing staff ensure that renters meet the NRAS eligibility requirements on behalf of rental providers and NRAS incentive holders.
- 4.2.2 The gross income limits for households of eligible renters are specified in the [NRAS Regulations](#).
- 4.2.3 Income levels are assessed against gross income limits according to the household composition. For NRAS purposes, a household is all persons who are resident in the dwelling. All persons who ordinarily reside in a NRAS home must have their income included as a member of the household.
- 4.2.4 A household’s gross income for the 12 months prior to commencement of a rental agreement of an NRAS dwelling must be equal to or less than the income limit for the household’s composition. Household income may then increase above the income limit. However, a dwelling will cease to be eligible for an incentive if the renters’ household income exceeds the applicable household income limit by 25% or more in two (2) consecutive eligibility years. Each year, household income limits are indexed according to percentage changes of All Groups Component of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) so that the limits effectively maintain the same target group of renters over the life of the Scheme.

5. Who is responsible for this policy

Who is responsible	Key activities
Launch Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all eligibility criteria has been met.
Renters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the eligibility criteria.

APPENDIX: ADMINISTRATION

6. Definitions

Term	Definition
Applicant	Person who has applied for housing via the VHR or, where permitted by this policy, directly to Launch Housing.
Community Housing	Housing owned or managed by a community housing association.
DFFH	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.
Public Housing	Properties owned and managed by DFFH.
VHR	Victorian Housing Register, the state-wide common application for people seeking public housing and community housing.
VHR Eligibility Criteria	<p>The VHR establishes who is eligible for social housing. The VHR Eligibility Criteria relates to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> income eligibility; asset eligibility; Australian Citizenship or permanent residency; and Victorian residency.

7. Related Launch Housing Policies

Document name	Description
Allocation Policy	Details how Launch Housing makes allocations to vacant properties in their long-term housing portfolio.
Rent Setting Policy	Details how rent is determined for Launch Housing renters.
Rent Arrears Policy	Details Launch Housing's approach to managing a tenancy when a renter falls behind in their regular rent payments.
Hardship and Temporary Absence Policy	Details how Launch Housing aids renters experiencing significant financial hardship.
Client / Tenant Complaints, Feedback and Appeals Policy	Details Launch Housing's policy and process for managing feedback, complaints and appeals made by clients, renters and stakeholders.

8. Legislation

This policy meets the following legislative requirements:

Name	Description
Housing Act 1983 (Vic)	Legislation for housing law, which seeks to improve housing administration in Victoria.

9. Regulatory / accreditation standards

This policy meets the following regulatory and/or accreditation requirements:

Standard	Standard reference
Housing Registrar Performance Standards	Standard 1: Tenant and housing services (Determining and managing eligibility, allocation, and termination of housing assistance)
Guidelines for registered housing agencies (DFFH)	Guidelines explaining income limits and eligibility guidelines for registered housing agencies that have received capital grant funding or transferred housing stock.

10. Amendments to this Policy

This policy may be amended, terminated or replaced at Launch Housing's discretion. This policy will be reviewed, and updated as required, on a periodic basis.

In the event any related State or Commonwealth legislation changes, the legislation/directions will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency with this policy.

Amendments			
Date last approved:	11/10/2024	Date of effect:	11/10/2024
Date last amended:	02/10/2024	Date of next review:	11/10/2026
Owner:	Group Manager, Housing Services	Approver:	Executive Director, Housing Solutions
Audience:	Renters in Long-Term properties owned or managed by Launch Housing, and staff managing these properties.		

11. Version Control

Version	Effective Date	Amended by	Approved By	Amendment
V1.0	30/04/2019	General Manager, Keeping Housing	General Manager, Keeping Housing	First Version.
V2.0	29/03/2021	General Manager, Keeping Housing	General Manager, Keeping Housing	Amended terminology as per RTA Changes.
V3.0	11/10/2024	Group Manager, Housing Services	Executive Director, Housing Solutions	Updated guidelines.