

Williamstown Rental Housing Co-operative Ltd

Policy Document

Policy Number:	021
Policy Name:	Rent Management Policy
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1. Introduction

Williamstown Rental Housing Co-operative recognises that a fair and equitable policy and procedure for the determination and collection of rents is necessary for the well-being of the tenant members and the financial viability of the co-operative.

2. Purpose

- To ensure that WRHC's calculation and collection of tenant-member rental payments comply with the Residential Tenancies Act and any applicable Office of Housing requirements.
- To ensure that WRHC maintains its financial viability, noting that the Co-operative is entirely dependent on rent from tenant-members for its income.
- To provide a balance between members' responsibilities to the Co-operative and the Co-operative being supportive of its members in difficult financial circumstances.

3. Relevant Co-operative Objectives

- To provide affordable low cost rental housing for all low income earners as an alternative to home ownership.
- To manage properties in the Hobson's Bay area which are owned by DHS or its successor, including, the collection of rents and the upkeep and maintenance of the properties, subject to negotiations with DHS.

4. Policy

- Rents will be calculated in accordance with the DHS Rental Rebate Policy and Procedures, as determined from time to time.

5. Procedure

5.1 Member Provision of Household Income Information

- To be eligible for rebated rental, all members must provide, on a timely basis, independent documentary evidence of all household income received.

- Members will be required by their tenancy (and member) agreement to provide these details to the Co-operative any time there is a change in their household income within two (2) weeks of that change.
- The Co-operative will also undertake household income reviews at least twice per year, normally at the time the Centrelink payments are automatically increased by the CPI rate.
- For all Co-operative household income reviews, members will have period of at least 4 weeks in which to provide the appropriate documentary evidence of household income to the Co-operative office.
- When providing household income details at any time, members must also provide the signed Statutory Declaration in the form provided by the OoH (the Pink Form) from time to time including listing all members of the household and their dates of birth.

5.2 Failure by Member to Provide Household Income Information

- Members who fall into arrears due to late notification of household income changes will be dealt with under the Arrears Policy
- Members who do not provide their full household income and Statutory Declaration documentation to the Co-operative within the Income Review deadline provided, will automatically be charged market rent as from that deadline until such time as the information is provided.
- The new rent based on the income information provided will only be charged from the Sunday date after the information was received.

5.3 Exemptions

- Members who agree to pay the applicable market rent for their property as determined by the OoH from time to time will be exempt from above requirements except that on an annual basis they will be required to provide (in the Statutory Declaration form provided by the OoH) the details of all persons living at the property, their dates of birth and their relationship to the tenant-member.
- Members who are approved to have their rent calculated based on the annual estimate of household income method will be exempt from the normal income reviews.

5.4 Annual Estimation Method of Rent Payable

- Members may be approved to provide an annual estimate of household income where a significant part of the household income is highly variable. An example of this is when a household member is self-employed.
- These members must provide to the Co-op by the end of August each year appropriate documentary evidence (Australian Tax Office Notice of Income Assessment plus where applicable Centrelink Annual Income Statement) of the previous financial year's actual household income plus the Statutory Declaration form as above including details of all persons living at the property and their dates of birth.

- A member's ability to use the annual estimation method will be decided by the Office Housing Worker.

5.5 Method for Payment of Rent

- Rent may be paid weekly or fortnightly by arrangement.
- **The WRHC actively encourages its members to pay through Centrelink or Direct Debit if possible.**

5.6 Due Date of Rent Payments

- The Co-operative requires that rent be paid so that the member's rent balance remains in advance at all times regardless of how rent is paid (refer above section). On the date the rent is paid the rent balance should be at least fourteen (14) days in advance.

5.7 Information on Rent Accounts

- A rent statement is sent to tenant members on a monthly basis.
- A member may request and be provided with a copy of their rent statement at any time.

6. Responsibilities

- Under the Rent Policy, the Housing Worker is responsible for compliance with all of the above policy requirements.
- The Housing Worker will report to the Board regarding which members have been charged market rent due to the late notification of household income details as provided above.
- It is the Housing Worker's responsibility to ensure that all information regarding members' income be kept confidential and is stored in the appropriate lockable cabinet.

7. Related Documents/Background

Rent Arrears Policy

Co-operative Act requirements for the expulsion of a member

Residential Tenancies Act