

Williamstown Rental Housing Co-operative Policy Document

Policy Number:	009
Policy Name:	Rent Arrears
Version Number:	003
Date approved by Board:	30/07/2019
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1. Introduction

Williamstown Rental Housing Co-operative (WRHC) is entirely dependent on rental income for its financial viability and therefore it is essential arrears and bad debt write-offs are avoided.

WRHC recognises that there needs to be a balance between supporting tenant members in financial difficulty and the financial viability of the Co-operative.

WRCH is governed by the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (RTA) with respect to actions and matters relating to Rent Arrears.

2. Purpose

To ensure WRCH is able to meet:

- all financial obligations and maintain financial viability for all members of the Co-operative; and
- its obligation through its contractual agreements with Department of Fairness, Families and Housing (DFFH) and the Victorian Housing Registrar to act responsibly with regard to rent collection.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all tenancies managed by WRHC.

4. Relevant Co-op Objectives

To manage properties in the Hobson's Bay area which are owned by the Director of Housing or its successor, including:

- to maintain financial viability of the Co-operative;
- the collection of rents;
- upkeep and maintenance of its properties;
- structural and upgrade repairs; and
- meeting all outgoing expenses.

5. Policy

WRHC will:

- have procedures to assist in the management of rent arrears in a timely manner;
- act in accordance with the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) in all matters relating to rent and rent arrears;
- inform potential tenants of the Rent Arrears policy and procedures at the point of being made an offer of housing with WRHC;
- make every reasonable effort with tenants to resolve issues related to rent arrears and to assist tenants, through negotiation, to maintain their tenancy; and
- proceed to and terminate tenancy agreements in accordance with the RTA where all reasonable actions and negotiations to maintain the tenancy have failed.

Tenants will be responsible for ensuring that:

- their rent balances remain in credit throughout the term of their tenancy;
- they avoid falling into rent arrears at any time during their tenancy;
- they inform WRCH when they first become aware that their rent account may fall into rent arrears for any circumstance; and
- they maintain the Arrears Agreement they enter into to maintain their tenancy.

Hardship

WRCH may show discretion on rent charges to assist tenants in financial difficulties. Where this occurs, the tenant must provide evidence in writing of their financial hardship. Any negotiation due to financial hardship will be time limited. Financial hardship assistance will be at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

Hardship negotiation will not prevent actions being taken in accordance with the provisions of the RTA. The formal time frame for acting upon each process may be extended through negotiation and at the discretion and approval by the Board of Directors.

6. Responsibilities

The Finance Worker and Housing Administrator are responsible for monitoring rent payments and rent arrears. The Housing Administrator, with approval from the Board, is responsible for carrying out this policy in line with the RTA.

7. Definitions

8. Related Documents

Policy 012 Ending Tenancy
Policy 013 Tenant Selection
Policy 014 Tenant Complaint
Policy 021 Rent Settings

Policy 001 Evictions
General Lease
Rules of Williamstown Rental Housing Co-operative

9. Legislation and standards

Residential Tenancies Act 1997

10. Transparency and accessibility

This policy will be available on the WRHC website www.williamstownhousingcoop.org.au