

Williamstown Rental Housing Co-operative Policy Document

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Policy Name:	Complaints and Appeals
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1. Introduction

Williamstown Rental Housing Co-operative Ltd. (WRHC) recognizes that complaints may arise from members and prospective members and that a fair and equitable policy is required to respond to and manage any complaints and appeals made.

2. Purpose

This policy establishes the approach of WRHC to complaints and appeals in respect of housing, Co-operative Housing applications and related services.

3. Scope

This policy applies to complaints and appeals made to WRHC by:

- Tenant members and prospective tenant members of WRHC in respect of rental housing; and
- People who WRHC has assisted to make an application for Co-operative housing under the Victorian Housing Register (VHR).

This policy does not apply to complaints or feedback received from people who are not tenant members, prospective tenant members or applicants for Co-operative Housing. This includes:

- complaints or grievances by employees of WRHC;
- complaints by contractors of WRHC; and
- complaints or registration of concern by other member of the community (for example, neighbours).

4. Relevant Co-op Objectives

To maintain fair, honest and transparent processes.

5. Policy

All tenant members and prospective tenant members of WRHC and applicants have the right to:

- complain about the way that WRHC has gone about delivering housing or related services; and
- appeal a decision made by WRHC in relation to their housing, application or services.

A person wanting to make a complaint or lodge an appeal can:

- Obtain a copy of the process by contacting the WRHC office by telephone, email, mail or in person after making an appointment.
- Lodge a complaint or appeal by contacting the WRHC by telephone, sending an email, hard copy paper or in person after making an appointment.

Where a serious breach has been alleged and the person requests intervention from WRHC they will be required to provide their information in writing.

WRHC welcomes complaints from members as a key means of receiving feedback, responding to the needs of members and improving its service delivery.

Accordingly, WRHC will:

- provide members with clear information about how they can make a complaint or lodge an appeal with WRHC and about any external complaint-handling bodies that are relevant including but not limited to Department of Fairness, Families and Housing (DFFH), and the Victorian Housing Registrar);
- support members to make a complaint or appeal in a way that is accessible to them;
- respond to complaints and appeals promptly, fairly and transparently;
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of members who make a complaint or lodge an appeal;
- not take any adverse action in respect of a member simply because the member has made a complaint or lodged an appeal;
- keep records of complaints made and appeals lodged; and
- use the outcome of complaints and appeals to improve WRHC's service delivery and minimise future complaints and appeals.

6. Responsibilities

Tenant members or prospective tenant members of WRHC who are affected by decisions of WRHC on matters relating to rental housing may ask for their complaint to be dealt with under the complaints and appeals procedure.

Under this procedure, WRHC must take all reasonable steps to resolve such complaints within 30 days after the complaint is made to WRHC.

An individual who is a tenant member or prospective tenant member of WRHC and who has made a complaint to WRHC may refer the complaint to the Housing Registrar for investigation if the complaint is not resolved within 30 days after it is made.

7. Definitions

Appeal When a person asks for a review of a decision of WRHC to which this policy applies

Applicant A person who WRHC assists to apply for social housing

Client	An applicant or a tenant member or prospective tenant member of WRHC
Complaint	A complaint is a client's registered expression of dissatisfaction with any service delivered or action taken by WRHC to which this policy applies.
DFFH	Department of Fairness, Families & Housing (formerly known as the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services)
Social housing	Both public housing (housing owned and managed by DFFH) and housing owned, controlled or managed by participating registered agencies (that is, registered housing agencies that participate in the VHR)
VHR	The Victorian Housing Register, the state-wide common application for people seeking social housing, which can be accessed via WRHC, DFFH, the mygov portal or designated support providers

8. Related Documentation

Policies

Housing Allocation
 Rent Setting
 Alteration and Disability Modifications
 Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest
 Tenant member Transfer and Succession
 Evictions
 Tenant member Recharge
 Privacy and Information Security

Legislation and standards

This policy implements WRHC obligations under:
 Housing Act 1983 (Vic) Part VIII Division 5 Subdivision 2 (Dispute Resolution)
 Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies as published by the Victorian Government.
 DFFH: Victorian Housing Register Operational Guidelines
 Co-operations Act 2001

Transparency and accessibility

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