

LONG-TERM HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY

1.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes the approach of EACH Housing (EHL) to eligibility for its long-term rental housing program. EHL provides social housing and sets eligibility criteria for rental of its long-term housing.

EHL considers the prioritisation and allocation of vacant properties in its long-term rental housing portfolio and strives to ensure successful and sustainable tenancies through the matching of applicants to properties.

This policy establishes the approach of EHL to the eligibility and allocations for tenancy in its long-term housing.

This policy applies to all long-term rental properties owned or managed by EHL. This includes the following:

- Properties included within the scope of the Victorian Housing Register.
- Properties not included within the scope of the Victorian Housing Register
- Properties registered with the NDIA as Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA).

This policy does not apply to the following housing programs run by EHL:

- Properties managed by EHL on behalf of other property owners where the owner retains responsibility for allocation of housing,
- Support programs with accommodation that are operated by EACH, EHL's parent company. e.g., Adult and Youth Residential Rehabilitation Programs and Residential Alcohol and Drug Programs.
- Properties designated for Specialist Disability Accommodation
- Programs which are not long-term housing programs including Deuchar Place and Head Lease programs

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 Eligibility for housing

EHL establishes eligibility criteria for long-term housing to fulfill its social mission and to ensure that its housing is made available to relieve households from housing stress.

Accordingly, EHL will:

- only allocates long-term housing to eligible applicants;
- communicate clearly to applicants and the community as to who is eligible for long-term housing with EHL; and
- comply with its contractual, legal, and regulatory obligations relating to eligibility for long-term housing.

2.1.2 Approach to allocation

EHL allocates long-term housing to eligible applicants in a manner which:

- is fair, transparent and equitable;

LONG-TERM HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY

- relieves households from housing stress;
- is in accordance with its contractual, legal and regulatory obligations; and
- supports the financial viability of EHL's long term housing programs.

EHL is committed to promoting successful and sustainable tenancies when matching applicants to its properties. This means that EHL will allocate housing in a way that:

- gives appropriate priority to households in need of housing assistance;
- considers the health, safety and support needs of applicants;
- matches individual housing needs with available properties; and
- supports sustainable and harmonious communities.

EHL ensures in making any allocation that it complies with any other legal requirements concerning eligibility for housing, or allocation of housing.

2.1.3 EHL participates in the Victorian Housing Register (VHR)

The VHR is a common register for all applicants seeking public and community housing in Victoria.

DHHS has established common eligibility criteria for the VHR that are set out in its Eligibility Criteria Operational Guidelines. The VHR's eligibility criteria apply to all long-term housing owned, managed, or controlled by EHL in Victoria except where certain properties have been agreed as out of scope.

All applicants with a current VHR application are taken by EHL to meet the VHR eligibility criteria.

Applicants without a current VHR application can provide evidence to EHL that establishes that they meet the VHR eligibility criteria. EHL will then assist such applicants to make a VHR application either through referral to a suitable service or by assisting the applicant to lodge a VHR application.

2.1.4 Additional requirements for eligibility for long term housing

In addition to meeting the VHR eligibility criteria, to be eligible for long-term housing with EHL, an applicant must have no previous debt with EHL.

EHL has the discretion to house a client with a previous debt and apply reasonable conditions upon an applicant on a case-by-case basis.

2.1.5 Specific requirements for long-term housing programs

EHL has some, long-term rental housing programs where additional eligibility criteria to the general eligibility criteria apply. This can include, for example our Rapid Housing Family Violence Program where we only house families fleeing domestic violence.

EHL communicates clearly with applicants and stakeholders as to the eligibility criteria that apply to that program.

LONG-TERM HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY

2.1.6 Allocations target – Victorian Housing Register

Under the VHR's allocations framework, EHL is required to meet an annual Priority Allocations Target. This requires EHL to allocate 75% of vacancies in Targeted Social Housing to Priority Access applicants in each financial year. As not all EHL's properties are Targeted Social Housing, this Target is adjusted so that EHL can make allocations across its portfolio to meet the Target.

EHL has implemented procedures to monitor its performance against the Priority Allocations Target regularly to ensure that EHL complies with its obligations.

2.1.7 Sourcing applicants

EHL will in the first instance seek suitable applicants from the VHR. Where a suitable applicant being considered for a vacancy does not have a current VHR application but is eligible for social housing under the VHR and suitable for that vacancy, then EHL will ensure that such applicants complete a VHR application at the time of making an offer of housing.

2.1.8 Nomination Rights

Where nomination rights apply, EHL will:

- establish appropriate arrangements in protocol agreements with referral agencies who have responsibility for nominating applicants for vacancies, to ensure timely and appropriate referrals; and
- require that referral agencies nominate applicants who have a current VHR Priority Access application.

Other legal requirements:

EHL will ensure in making any allocation that it complies with any other legal requirements concerning eligibility for housing or allocation of housing.

2.1.9 Promoting successful and sustainable tenancies

EHL is committed to treating all applicants fairly and will not unlawfully discriminate against any potential applicant or applicant.

EHL assesses all applicants before making an offer of housing to determine suitability for a particular vacancy (and eligibility if the applicant does not currently have a VHR application). If EHL declines to offer an applicant housing, it will inform the applicant accordingly.

2.1.10 Matching households to the right house

In allocating housing, EHL also has regards to the VHR operational guideline, *Clients with Special Accommodation Requirements*.

EHL will match applicants to properties so that an allocation ensures that it meets the needs of the following criteria's

- the property right size for the applicant's household
- the property in an area consistent with the applicant's needs
- the location assists the applicant to access employment or any support services that they need

LONG-TERM HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY

- the property makes the best use of housing stock owned or managed by EHL
- the allocation encourages a sustainable tenancy; and
- meets any specific need identified by the applicant, such as modifications for people with a physical disability or mobility impairment, availability of car parking or room for carers.

EHL aims to make sure that properties with specific features that are in high demand and short supply are only allocated to those applicants who need them, including:

- properties that are suitable for older people
- properties that have been built or modified to meet the needs of people with a disability
- properties on the ground floor,
- properties with level access; or
- properties with a yard/garden.

EHL will ask applicants to provide reasonable evidence to substantiate specific housing requirements if this is not contained in a VHR application.

2.1.11 Supporting sustainable and harmonious communities

EHL may, to the extent necessary, adopt different strategies in allocation in response to:

- a high concentration of public and community housing stock in a particular area;
- a high concentration of renters with multiple health, social or economic issues in a particular area or building;
- existing tenancy management issues (or a potential for them to develop).
- existing neighborhood tensions or disputes which may be exacerbated if allocations are not sensitively handled; and
- a mismatch of supply and demand making the property hard to let.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Applicant	means a person who has applied for housing via the VHR or, where permitted by this policy, directly to EHL.
DHHS	means the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services.
Director of Housing	means the Victorian government statutory authority that owns all public housing land in Victoria, and which is the principal funding body for community housing.
NDIA / NDIS	Means the National Disability Insurance Agency / National Disability Insurance Scheme
Nomination rights	means arrangements between EHL and third-party support providers where the support provider nominates applicants for certain vacant properties.
Priority Access	means applicants on the VHR who have been assessed as having a priority housing need. The Priority Access Categories are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Management Housing • Priority Transfers • Homeless with Support • Supported Housing

LONG-TERM HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY

- Temporary Absence
- Special Housing Needs
- Special Housing Needs (Aged 55 years and over)

Targeted Social Housing	means the properties that are considered Targeted Social Housing under agreements between EHL and the Director of Housing.
VHR	means the Victorian Housing Register, the Statewide common application for people seeking public housing and community housing.

4.0 DOCUMENT OWNER

The Operations Housing, EHL is the subject matter expert and person responsible for this document review.

5.0 REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

This policy implements EHL's obligations under:

- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies (Housing Registrar)
- Legal agreements between EHL and the Director of Housing relating to the VHR
- DHHS Victorian Housing Register Operational Guidelines
- Application documents
- Starting, During and Ending a Tenancy documents
- Eligibility Policy
- Eligibility Procedure
- Allocations to VHR policy