

Rent Setting - Policy

The responsibility for setting the rents rests with the Board of Foundation Housing who will take advice from the Housing Coordinator.

Foundation Housing will follow accepted community housing standards for rent setting procedure for all tenants which complies with the requirements with the Department of Housing and Works. For those tenants eligible to receive Centrelink Rent Assistance, their rent will be set at a level, which will maximise rent assistance payments

Market Rent

The Department of Housing and Works sets a 'market rent' for all properties. This rent, in conjunction with the income/composition of the tenant household is used by Centrelink to calculate Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

No tenant of Foundation Housing pays in excess of the Department of Housing and Works market rent for the property.

Rent Assessment - Procedure

Rent is assessed at 25% of the gross combined household income plus Commonwealth Rent Assistance. If this figure is equal to or greater than market rent, then the rent payable will be market rent. Anybody residing in the property for six weeks or longer will be regarded as a household member.

Notifying the Tenant of the Rent Level Amount

At the first tenancy interview the assessable income is confirmed subject to the tenant providing proof of income for all household members. The method of rent calculation is explained by the Housing Coordinator to the tenant at this time.

Rent Payments - Procedure

Tenant responsibilities in relation to rent payment are clearly detailed in the Tenant Handbook.

Commencement Date for First Rental Payment

Rent is paid fortnightly in advance. Where possible, the Housing Officer will request that tenants make a cash payment for the number of days between the commencement of the tenancy and their first Centrelink pay day.

Rent Payment Systems

The method of payment is agreed upon at the first tenancy interview.

For those tenants in receipt of a Centrelink payment, Centrepay is Foundation Housing's preferred method of payment. The Housing Officer will assist tenants to complete and lodge Centrepay payment forms if required.

Rent can also be paid directly into any Bank West Branches. Tenants wishing to pay their rent in this way must obtain a card from the Housing Officer giving details of Foundation Housing's account numbers. Tenants making payments through Bank West must ensure that payments are identified to them, and that they retain their receipts.

Monitoring Rent Payments

The Housing Assistants, in conjunction with the financial department monitors Centrepay and Bank statements to ensure that all payments are up to date.

Proof of Rent Payment

In the instances of tenants wishing to pay their rent in cash although this is discouraged the Housing Officer will provide a receipt for any cash or cheques received in the Offices of Foundation Housing. The receipt will show:

- Name of tenant
- Address of property
- Amount paid
- Period covered
- Signature

Receipts will not be issued for payments received through Centrepay or Bendigo Bank.

Quarterly Rental Statements

The Housing Officer will forward a monthly rental statement to each tenant, the statement will show:

- Opening balance
- Payments received
- Rental charges for the statement period

Changing the Amount of Rent Payment

The tenant must inform the Housing Officer of any changes to their income or to household composition. The HC will then conduct a rent review in accordance with the Rent Review Procedure