

Steps to becoming a tenant

This information sheet explains the process we follow when we offer a property to people on the Department of Communities and Community Housing Organisations Joint Wait List.

When you applied to join the Department of Communities Waitlist you ticked that you'd also like to be offered a community housing property. These properties are also available at less than the private rental market rate and for as long as you are eligible. Foundation Housing is one of the organisations who use the list to allocate homes.

How do you find me?

When we have a suitable house for you, we'll contact you for with the details of the property. We might do this by:

- **telephone**
- **letter**
- **text message**

If you are interested in renting the property from us, please contact us straight away to arrange an interview with us and a viewing of the property. We may have contacted several eligible people about the same property; unfortunately we cannot keep a property vacant indefinitely while you to consider it.

What happens at the interview?

We'll gather more information from you to better understand your current housing requirements and advise you on what assistance we can provide.

Foundation Housing conducts interviews to assess your needs: we do not receive any information from the Department of Communities other than your household details, e.g. address, telephone number, bedroom entitlement, zone choice, your application number and registration date.

During your interview, it's important that you give

us as many details as you can so that we know what requirements of you and your family require.

What to bring to your interview

- Photo ID.
- Centrelink cards for any member receiving Centrelink.
- Pay slips for each working member of the household, including pay slips for casual employment.

How do I apply to live in this home?

Once you're satisfied this property will suit you needs and we have collected your current details at your interview, you can apply to live there with by submitting an Expression of Interest form to us. We'll advise you of the outcome as soon as possible.

What to ask yourself at the home open

- **Where are the nearest medical facilities and schools? Are they appropriate for my family?**
- **Is there public transport nearby? How long would it take to get to work, school, or the shops?**
- **Am I in a lease already? Can I break it?**
- **Are my pets suited to this home?**
- **Have my household numbers changed? Am I having or planning a baby? Have any of my family left home?**
- **Do I still want to live in this zone?**

If any of the above has changed please contact the Department of Communities and update your details.

How do you decide my rent?

1. If you're a Band A¹ household you'll usually pay rent of up to 25% of the gross² income of you and everyone who lives with you, plus any Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) you may be entitled to receive.
2. If you're a Band B³ household you'll usually pay rent of up to 30% of the net⁴ income of you and everyone who lives with you, plus any Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) you may be entitled to receive.
3. We will never charge you more rent than the market rent⁵ for the property. This is our maximum rent. Any utilities charges are paid on top of the rent.

CRA is not considered income; 100% of it is added to the percentage of your income to form your rent.

Example:

Band A household has an income of \$394.20 per week, plus CRA of \$64.70.

Band A rent is 25% of \$394.20 a week = \$98.55.

Add CRA of \$64.70 = \$163.25.

Final rent is \$163.00 (rounded).

If there is a change in your income or the people who live with you, you need to tell us immediately so that we can adjust your rent. If your rent is reduced, it will apply from the next rent charge. You can ask to have your rent re-assessed if you think the market rent has dropped at any time, including at time of offer.

¹ Within the eligible income limits of the Housing Authority

² Before tax

³ Over the Housing Authority income limits but within Community Housing income limits

⁴ After tax

⁵ Market rent is the amount your property would cost to rent in the open market.

Declining a property

You can decline the property you are offered, however you must have a valid reason. If you do not have a valid reason to decline a property, you will be removed from the Joint Wait List for six months. After this time period you will be reinstated. In the meantime, you will remain on the Department of Communities list and may be housed through them.

Examples of valid reasons:

- Excessive distance from specialist medical, educational or social support services. You must demonstrate these services are not available closer to the offered property, and how travelling via vehicle or public transport is not feasible.
- Too far from employment: the inability to travel must be demonstrated.
- Your circumstances have changed, e.g. extra dependents.
- You have a lease on a private rental property. A copy of your lease must be provided.
- Inability to use stairs: you must provide supporting documentation.
- Compassionate circumstances.

Examples of invalid reasons:

- Lack of a garage, or only street parking.
- Size of backyard, e.g. no garden, too much garden.
- You have too much furniture, or your furniture is too big.
- You would prefer a new house.
- You would prefer public housing only.
- The rent is too high.

What Foundation Housing can do

We offer long term, stable accommodation.

We have our own maintenance team, and we offer tenancy support if you need assistance.

We can house you off the Joint Wait List.

We have higher income eligibility band limits than the Housing Authority. You can continue working and rent one of our properties, subject to band limits.

What we can't do

Change any of your Joint Wait List information with the Department of Communities data base, such as your bedroom allocation, zone preference, or update your change of address and telephone numbers.

While we will try our best to house you in the area and type of house you requested, you may not be offered exactly what you want, where you want: the availability of properties cannot be predicted. However, you will be offered a property within your zone request.