

# Allocation of housing

## Housing allocations policy

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## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 To outline the process used by Mission Australia (MAH) to match the needs of applicants to suitable properties.
- 1.2 To outline the evidence required of applicants where they request a property with special or additional features.
- 1.3 To outline the instances in which MAH may make sensitive allocations.

## 2 Related policies

- 2.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the:
  - 2.1.1 [Housing Applications Policy](#) which specifies the processes used by MAH to capture applicant information for the purpose of identifying suitable properties.
  - 2.1.2 [Offers of Housing Policy](#) which explains the process of making an offer of a suitable property at MAH; the circumstances in which MAH may withdraw an offer and requirements where offers of suitable housing have been refused by applicants.

## 3 Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to MAH staff responsible for undertaking and managing allocations of social and affordable housing.

## 4 Guiding principles

- 4.1** MAH aims to promote stable and sustainable communities and reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour through proactive allocations decisions.
- 4.2** MAH facilitates successful tenancies by ensuring that the allocation of housing strikes a balance between the needs of the organisation, the tenant and the community, to minimise future tenancy problems and maximise tenant satisfaction.
- 4.3** MAH ensures that an allocated property meets the identified needs of a tenant and their household.
- 4.4** MAH seeks to maximise the utilisation of scarce housing resources through its allocations decisions.
- 4.5** MAH seeks to support applicants to remain connected to or build connections with support services, local opportunities and their informal supports.
- 4.6** MAH aims to encourage equity through the housing allocation process.
- 4.7** MAH complies with the jurisdictional requirements of operating states.
- 4.8** Applicants are assisted, where required, to maintain their independence and improve their quality of life through the allocation process of MAH.
- 4.9** To avoid actual, or perceived, conflicts of interest between the applicant's employment and their tenancy, MAH will not allocate properties to staff of MAH, or to staff of Mission Australia (MA) or agencies working with MAH.
- 4.10** MAH upholds accountability and transparency through its record keeping practices.
- 4.11** Applicants and tenants are given opportunities to appeal organisational decisions in order to ensure fair and transparent outcomes.

## **5** Policy

### **5.1 General allocation requirements**

- 5.1.1** Staff will inform tenants of their right to appeal organisational decisions and to complain about the services of MAH as per the [Appeals and Complaints Policy](#).
- 5.1.2** Staff will hold in confidence any personal or sensitive information disclosed through the allocations process unless disclosure is required under law or consented to by the person subject of that information as per the [Privacy and Confidentiality Policy](#).
- 5.1.3** Staff will store any evidence or documentation supplied during the application or allocation process within the tenancy management system and/or on state based waiting lists.

### **5.2 Social housing allocations**

- 5.2.1** MAH will wherever possible allocate approved applicants a property in their preferred location as identified in their application for housing.

5.2.2 MAH adheres to the following minimum standards in the number of bedrooms allocated to applicants, depending on family/household size and the age of family/household members:

- Single people will be allocated a studio unit, bed sit, or one bedroom property
- Couples (without children) will be allocated a one bedroom property
- Single people and couples with one or two children will be allocated a two or three bedroom property
- Single people and couples with three or four children will be allocated a three or four bedroom property
- Single people and couples with five or more children will be allocated a four or five bedroom property
- Household members aged 18 years of age or over will be allocated their own bedroom unless they are part of a couple
- Children of the same sex may be required to share a bedroom unless there is six or more years difference between them
- Children of a different sex will not be required to share the same bedroom irrespective of age
- Full time live-in carers (non- spousal) will be allocated their own bedroom where applicable.

**Note:** where applicants request an additional number of bedrooms they will be required to meet the evidence standards for special consideration as per [5.3](#).

### 5.3 Customised allocations to accommodate specific needs

MAH may make customised allocations for applicants with specific needs, such as a request for an additional bedroom. These circumstances will require sufficient evidence to be provided by the applicant. Evidence requirements for customised allocations are contained in the [Applications Policy](#).

### 5.4 Sensitive allocations

5.4.1 MAH will generally allocate a vacant property to the applicant with the highest priority who is an appropriate match for the property.

5.4.2 In some circumstances MAH may use a sensitive allocations approach. This may mean making an offer to a household on the general waiting list, rather than the priority list. Instances where sensitive allocations will be used include where:

- Neighbourhoods or building complexes which have specific management issues, such as high levels of antisocial behaviour.

- Applicants have a history that would make certain allocations more or less appropriate for them, such as applicants escaping family or domestic violence.
- There are cultural considerations, particularly for allocations in high density building complexes.

## **5.5 Hard-to-let properties**

Where properties are hard to let, MAH may take a more flexible approach to allocations. This may include being more lenient with regard to the household complement requirements. For example, if a two bedroom property has been difficult to let, MAH may make an offer to a couple without children who would be a good match for the property, even though usually they would be offered a one bedroom property.

## **5.6 Allocations decisions regarding MA or MAH staff, or staff of agencies working with MAH**

- 5.6.1 To avoid conflicts of interest, applicants are required to disclose to MAH at the time of making an application whether they work or volunteer for Mission Australia (MA) or MAH, and/or whether they have family or friends who work or volunteer for MA or MAH. In these cases, the application will not be able to be processed by MAH and will be sent to another office (either another community housing provider or state housing authority) for processing.
- 5.6.2 MAH staff will not be allocated MAH social or affordable housing properties.
- 5.6.3 Where MA staff, or staff of agencies working with MAH, are on the housing register or waiting list, the Allocations Officer will speak to the Team Leader/Regional Manager about whether the applicant's role at MA could be in conflict with their tenancy if they were to be housed with MAH. Where there would be a conflict, or a perceived conflict, MAH will advise the applicant that they will not be eligible to live in an MAH property, but that this will not affect their eligibility for housing with another community housing provider or state housing authority.

## **6 State and program based requirements**

### **6.1 New South Wales**

MAH will be required to determine the appropriate number of bedrooms to allocate where an applicant in NSW applies, and is approved, for housing.

### **6.2 Queensland and Tasmania**

- 6.2.1 In Queensland and Tasmania, state housing authorities are responsible for processing applications for housing.
- 6.2.2 Where an applicant in Queensland or Tasmania informs MAH that their circumstances have changed since they lodged their application for housing with

their state housing authority and they are able to show cause, MAH will be required to authorise this.

- 6.2.3 Where information is provided by social housing applicants in Tasmania and Queensland which changes their bedroom size requirements, MAH will with applicant consent relay any changes to state housing authorities as per the [Housing Applications Policy](#). Where suitable housing stock is available, an appropriate property may be offered.

### 6.3 Affordable housing allocations

- 6.3.1 Affordable housing will be allocated to low and moderate income households, and on exception very low income households, and a range of household configurations. Allocations decisions will be based on:

- The associated State or Commonwealth affordable housing program guidelines
- Achieving a mix of income bands
- Additional criteria specific to the property or program such as demonstrated connection to area or requirement to live in a seniors living unit.
- Priority/preference given to low – moderate income earners where at least one household member is engaged in regular employment
- Bedroom categories for affordable housing properties are the same as for social housing properties as per 5.2.2 of this policy.

### 6.4 Transitional housing allocations

- 6.4.1 MAH receives nominations for clients from support providers for transitional housing.
- 6.4.2 Before allocations can be made for transitional housing, clients must also be eligible for state-based housing. In New South Wales this means they must be entered onto HOMES.

## 7 Definitions

**Affordable housing** is housing for individuals or families on low to moderate incomes who are having difficulty affording housing in the private rental market. It is generally targeted at working households. Rent for affordable housing is often calculated as a discounted market rent, for example 80 per cent, and may also include an income-based measure, such as 30% of gross income. An example of an affordable housing program is the Commonwealth National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS). There are also state-based affordable housing programs.

**Allocation principles** are the rules and standards which govern the provision of properties to applicants and tenants of MAH.

**Sensitive allocations** are allocations where rather than allocating a property to the applicant at the top of the wait list, the Allocations Officer considers the suitability of the applicant for the vacancy, on the basis of the information they have about the applicant and the knowledge they have about the property, its location, and the neighbourhood.

**Social Housing** is housing for individuals and families on very low and low incomes who have been on the social housing waiting list in their state. Social housing applicants are generally in receipt of Centrelink benefits. Rent for social housing is set at approximately 25% of income, plus 100% of the tenant's Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) payment entitlement.

**Transitional housing** is short-term accommodation with access to support services. It acts as a stepping stone to more permanent public, community or private market housing.