

Changing needs of tenants

Occupancy policy

Policy section: 1.0

Section name: Changing needs of Tenants

Policy: 1.3.2

Document name	Occupancy
Applicability	Mission Australia Housing
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1 Purpose

- 1.1 To outline when Mission Australian Housing (MAH) may determine that a property is **over or under occupied**.
- 1.2 To outline requirements and process where MAH determines that a property is over or under occupied.
- 1.3 To outline the rights and responsibilities of tenants where their property has been deemed over or under occupied.

2 Related policies

- 2.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the:
 - 2.1.1 [Visitors Policy](#), which outlines the requirements of MAH when tenants have visitors at their property.
 - 2.1.2 [Additional and Unauthorised Occupants Policy](#), which outlines requirements for tenants of MAH who wish to have, or require, an additional occupant at their property.
 - 2.1.3 [Housing Allocations Policy](#), which specifies the number of bedrooms that are typically allocated to households of various sizes.

3 Scope

This policy applies to staff responsible for managing tenants and properties of MAH.

4 Guiding principles

- 4.1 MAH addresses occupancy concerns in order to ensure that housing assets are put to best use.
- 4.2 MAH aims to ensure that each tenant and their household are able to enjoy an appropriately sized property wherever possible.
- 4.3 MAH informs tenants of its decision to initiate a management transfer and wherever possible seeks the input of tenants for mutually beneficial outcomes.
- 4.4 Tenants are given opportunities to appeal organisational decisions and to complain about the services of MAH.
- 4.5 MAH upholds accountability and transparency through its record keeping practices.

5 Policy

- 5.1 MAH aims to ensure that a property provides appropriate living space for a tenant and, where applicable, their household. MAH aims to ensure appropriateness by allocating properties that are neither too large nor too small for tenants and household members. Before a tenancy has commenced, MAH uses any information provided by housing applicants to scope and allocate suitable properties as per the [Housing Allocations Policy](#).
- 5.2 MAH also recognises that household composition may change during a tenancy for a range of reasons, including but not limited to:
 - Divorce/separation
 - Remarriage
 - Cultural obligations
 - Children leaving the care of a tenant
 - Death or illness
 - A tenant requiring or no longer requiring a live-in carer.
- 5.3 When the number of people in a household either increases or decreases, MAH may determine that a property has become over or under occupied.
- 5.4 Where there is more than one spare bedroom in a property, MAH will generally determine that the property is under occupied. Conversely, where a lounge room is used as a bedroom; where an adult shares a bedroom with one or more children; or where three or more children have been sharing a bedroom, MAH will generally determine that a property is over occupied.
- 5.5 MAH does not consider visitors within occupancy assessments and only members of a household who have been approved to live at a property are considered for the purpose of allocating properties of appropriate size.

- 5.6 Where a property is identified as over or under occupied, MAH will subject to property availability seek to transfer the tenant and any household members to a more suitably sized property as per the [Transfers Policy](#).
- 5.7 Tenants will be informed of their right to complain about the services of MAH and to appeal organisational decisions as per the [Appeals Policy](#) and [Complaints Policy](#).
- 5.8 Staff will keep all records relating to occupancy within the tenancy management system.
- 5.9 **Other considerations**
- 5.9.1 Tenants are expected to inform MAH and seek approval within 28 days where the composition of their household changes, or where their household has grown. Where a tenant has not sought approval for additional occupants in their property and MAH identifies additional unapproved occupants, action may be taken to rectify the matter as per the [Additional and Unauthorised Occupants Policy](#). Tenants are expected to inform MAH in order to ensure that they and their household pay the correct amount of rent for their property as per the [Rent and Rebate Policy](#).

6 Definitions

Over occupancy: refers to a property that has exceeded its capacity. These properties may contain little vacant space and may be subject to overcrowding.

Under occupancy: refers to a property that is not used to its full capacity. These properties may contain vacant space.