

Affordable private rentals

This fact sheet provides information about affordable private rental properties that are available for people facing barriers to securing housing, such as people on low incomes or those affected by family violence.

Overview

Affordable private rental accommodation is available with leases of up to two years, at an affordable rent in a good location, close to services and transport.

If you are eligible and allocated a property, you will sign a lease with Loreto Community Housing, a registered and experienced housing provider. Loreto Community Housing will be your tenancy manager and will help you throughout your tenancy.

Private rental accommodation is available across Tasmania for single people, couples and families.

If you are interested in applying you can contact Housing Connect on 1800 800 588 or visit one of its offices located in Hobart, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the affordable rental programs, applicants must:

- live in Tasmania
- be an Australian citizen, or a permanent resident, including refugee visa subclasses 200, 201, 202, 203 and 204
- be 18 years or older
- be on a low income and eligible for a Commonwealth Health Care Card
- not own land or a home of their own
- not have financial assets worth more than \$35 000. This amount includes the assets of any people who live in the household, including shares, property and money in the bank. It does not include things such as cars or household items. Self-managed super funds are also not included, and
- be able to live independently, with no previous issues in looking after a rental property.

To be eligible for Family Violence Rapid Rehousing, applicants must also:

- be facing homelessness or at risk due to family violence, including perpetrators required to leave the family home.

If you have lived in social housing with Loreto Community Housing, your tenancy history will be reviewed to help decide whether this program is a good fit for you.

If you are facing homelessness due to family violence, your income and asset limits may be waived. If this is the case, Housing Connect may request supporting evidence such as police or court orders.

Types of properties available

Properties in this program:

- are close to services and public transport or in areas of demand
- meet the minimum standards of the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*
- will be available to rent for two years, with a possible extension after the initial lease period
- are matched to your needs, including affordability, property type, number of bedrooms and location.

If you are affected by family violence you may receive additional essential items under the Tasmanian Government's Safe at Home Flexible Supports Packages

www.safeathome.tas.gov.au/services/financial-support-for-victim-survivors/flexible-support-packages) and the RSPCA's Safe Beds for Pets program www.rspcatas.org.au/rspca-petbarn-foundation-safe-beds-program/).

You can ask Housing Connect for more information.

Bond and rent

To keep rents affordable, maximum weekly rents are set at the lesser amount of either:

- 30 per cent of your total household income plus 100 per cent of any Commonwealth Rent Assistance you are eligible for or
- 74.9 per cent of market rent.

Market rent is based on rents for similar properties in the same location, as determined by the most recent data from the Real Estate Institute of Tasmania.

Loreto Community Housing will review market rent at the start of each new lease to set the household's contribution.

Market rent increases are capped at 15 per cent for each lease extension.

Bond is set at four weeks' rent and must be lodged with the Rental Deposit Authority using MyBond (www.cbos.tas.gov.au/topics/housing/mybond).

Rent contributions that are based on the household's gross assessable income are adjusted in accordance with any changes in the household's income.

Property allocation

Your application for an affordable private rental goes onto the Housing Register and is assessed under the Social Housing Policy which considers affordability of your housing, risk of homelessness, safety and health/mobility needs, and your application is placed into one of three categories:

1. Highest priority – includes people exiting homelessness services, prison or hospital, or young people leaving care.
2. Standard priority – other high-need applicants based on health, homelessness, safety and affordability.
3. General – in need, based on health, homelessness and affordability.

Property allocations are made using the Housing Register based on priority, wait time and property suitability. Loreto Community Housing will contact you using the details on your application when a suitable property becomes available.

Read the Social Housing Policy: www.homestasmania.com.au/social-housing-policy

National Rental Affordability Scheme properties

The National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) ends in 2026. If you are a tenant in an NRAS property, the owner may want to transfer the property to the affordable private rental programs.

If you want to stay in the property, the owner will ask you to contact Housing Connect to see if you are eligible. If you are eligible, and the owner of the property is approved to transfer their property, you will sign a lease with Loreto Community Housing.

Frequently asked questions

What is Loreto Community Housing?

Loreto Community Housing is an experienced Tasmanian housing provider established in 2014, that manages social and affordable housing.

What do I need to do as a tenant?

You need to comply with the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*, which includes paying your rent on time, looking after the property by keeping it clean and undamaged, and being a good neighbour.

You need to pay your water and electricity bills and for any tenant damage.

What happens to my lease after two years?

Funding for the affordable private rental programs is currently available until June 2028. Any lease extensions will be subject to funding availability.

What happens to my social housing application if I accept an affordable private rental?

A social housing application is closed if you are allocated a property in the Private Rental Incentives program.

A social housing application stays open if you are allocated a property in the Family Violence Rapid Rehousing program.

You should speak regularly with your tenancy manager to see if it is possible for you to sign another two-year lease with the property owner once your lease ends.

If it is not possible to sign a new lease, you should contact Housing Connect as soon as you can to discuss other housing options.

Can I apply if I am not on the Housing Register?

You can apply for an affordable private rental if you meet the eligibility criteria. Contact Housing Connect on 1800 800 588 to discuss your eligibility and to complete an application.

Can my landlord list my rental in the program and lower my rent?

Existing tenancies are not eligible to be put into the affordable private rental programs. There is an exception for NRAS properties – see the NRAS section above.

Can my landlord end my tenancy so they can list their property in the program?

No. Tenancies can only be ended for reasons set out in the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*.

Will I be eligible for private rental assistance?

No. People accessing subsidised housing programs, including social housing and affordable private rentals, are not eligible for private rental assistance. Housing Connect may apply discretion for people affected by family violence.

Do I have to pay a bond?

Yes, you will be asked to pay a bond. Bond is set at four weeks' rent and must be lodged using MyBond.

Will I get Commonwealth Rent Assistance?

Yes, if you are eligible. The amount of rent you pay to Loreto Community Housing may include your Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

You need to contact Centrelink to discuss your eligibility or check their website.

Who do I contact if there is an issue during my lease?

Contact your tenancy manager at Loreto Community Housing to discuss any issues or concerns about the property or tenancy on 6173 0060 or at lch@aohtas.org.au.

The following websites also provide useful information:

- Tenants' Union of Tasmania: www.tutas.org.au
- Consumer, Building and Occupational Services: cbos.tas.gov.au/topics/housing
- *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*:
www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1997-082

More information

Housing Connect: 1800 800 588

Website: www.homestasmania.com.au/affordable-private-rentals