

Private Rental Incentives Program Information for applicants and tenants

Overview

The Private Rental Incentives (PRI) program is a new way we are helping eligible Tasmanians on low incomes access affordable private rental properties.

The program provides a rental property on a two-year lease at an affordable rent located near services and transport.

If you are eligible for the program and allocated a property, you sign a lease with Centacare Evolve Housing (CEH), a registered and experienced community housing provider.

You will not have a lease with the property owner. CEH will be your tenancy manager and will assist you throughout your tenancy.

Properties are being made available for all types of households – singles, couples and families – all across Tasmania.

Interested applicants can apply for the program through Housing Connect. There are Housing Connect offices in Hobart, Rosny, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie or you can call 1800 800 588.

Eligibility

To be eligible you must be able to show that you:

- live in Tasmania
- are an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- are 18 years or older
- are a low-income earner
- do not have assets that could be used to meet your housing needs
- are able to afford the rent
- can live independently (with little to no support)

- are not experiencing family violence (Housing Connect can offer you alternative options)
- do not require property amenities such as walk-in-shower, no stairs, etc
- can show you have looked after rental properties in the past and will be able to look after a property in this program.

If you have lived in social housing with either with Homes Tasmania or with CEH (the tenancy manager), your tenancy history may be reviewed to help make the decision about whether this program is the best fit for you.

If you have a tenancy history with substantial rental arrears, property damage or anti-social behaviour, you will not be considered suitable for this program.

National Rental Affordability Scheme properties

With the Australian Government's National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) coming to an end, the Tasmanian Government has amended the eligibility criteria for properties under the PRI.

Homes Tasmania will apply discretion for properties exiting the NRAS that are not new to the rental market and are tenanted at the time of application.

Where an NRAS property owner is considering applying for the PRI, their current tenant will need to contact Housing Connect to be assessed for PRI.

If eligible, they will be placed on the Housing Register.

NRAS properties will **only** have discretion applied to their application when current tenants are assessed as **eligible**. The tenant can then sign a sub-lease with CEH.

Type of properties available

Properties in this program are:

- close to services, public transport and shops
- meet the minimum standards of the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*
- available to rent for a minimum of two years with the option of an extension
- matched to your needs, including affordability, property type, size and location.

How much is rent?

Maximum weekly rents are set at 25 to 30 per cent below the region median market rent based on the size and location of the property.

The rent amount will not change during the two-year lease (see Table 1).

Table 1 Maximum weekly rent (capped):

Region	Bedrooms	Maximum weekly rent
North-West	1	\$130
	2	\$180
	3	\$217
	4	\$263
North	1	\$154
	2	\$224
	3	\$263
	4	\$315
South	1	\$203
	2	\$273
	3	\$322
	4	\$399

Frequently asked questions

What is expected of tenants?

You are expected to pay your rent on time, look after the property by keeping it clean and undamaged, and be a good neighbour. A failure to do this may result in termination of your lease (in accordance with the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*).

You need to be able to pay for your water and electricity usage. You will be responsible for any tenant damage to the property.

Maintenance will be carried out in accordance with the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*.

What happens to my lease after two years?

Property owners can decide to make their property available for another two years after the first lease ends. If they do, you (the tenant) may be offered the opportunity to stay in the property for another two years.

I am already on the Housing Register. Why do I have to complete another assessment with Housing Connect?

This program helps eligible people find a private rental home. It is not social housing. If you are interested in renting a private rental property, then this program might suit you.

We need to make sure all your details are correct, and that we know exactly what type of property in what type of location you are looking for.

I am not on the Housing Register but am a low-income earner or Centrelink recipient and am struggling to find an affordable rental. Can I apply for housing through this program?

Yes. Please contact Housing Connect on 1800 800 588 to discuss your eligibility and to go through the application process.

I can't afford my current rent. Can my owner or agent list my rental in the program and lower my rent?

No. Existing tenancies are not eligible for the program.

Can my landlord end my tenancy so they can access this program?

No. Tenancies can only be ended for the reasons set out in the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*. Properties will not be approved for the program if they are tenanted.

What happens if I reject a property offer in this program?

Your application will be cancelled if you reject a property that meets the preferences that you indicated in your application. This will not impact the status of any other applications for assistance you may have.

What happens to my social housing application if I accept a property under this program?

If you accept a lease with this program, your social housing application will be cancelled because you will have secured housing.

You are encouraged to speak regularly with your tenancy manager to work out whether you and the property owner are happy to renew your lease at the end of the two years.

If lease renewal is not going to happen, contact Housing Connect early so you can consider other options.

Will I be eligible for private rental assistance?

Yes, you will be able to apply for private rental assistance if you accept a tenancy through this program. Housing Connect can provide you with further information.

As well as assistance with bond and rent in advance payments, private rental assistance can help with rental arrears, removals assistance and starter packs for new tenancies.

Do I pay a bond?

Yes, you will be asked to pay a bond. If you need help paying this bond, you are still eligible to apply for private rental assistance through Housing Connect.

Will I get Commonwealth Rent Assistance?

Yes, if you are eligible for it. 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, CEH, to discuss any concerns about the property or tenancy. The following information may also help:

Tenants' Union of Tasmania: www.tutas.org.au

Consumer, Building and Occupational Services: www.cbos.tas.gov.au/topics/housing

Residential Tenancy Act 1997: www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1997082

Who is Centacare Evolve Housing?

Centacare Evolve Housing is a community housing provider that provides safe and affordable homes through various programs.

Community housing providers manage around half of all social housing in Tasmania and are registered and experienced tenancy managers.

More information

Call Housing Connect on 1800 800 588 or visit the PRI website at www.homestasmania.com.au/Private-Rental/Private-rental-incentives