

Aboriginal housing policy

Purpose

To provide direction for the delivery of Aboriginal housing by social housing providers in Tasmania.

Policy context

Aboriginal housing is a type of social housing. A dedicated portfolio of Aboriginal housing properties is available for eligible Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people because it contributes to improved health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people are also able to access other housing assistance including indigenous community housing, private rental programs and home ownership assistance.

Aboriginal housing properties in Tasmania are owned by the Homes Tasmania and are managed by various social housing providers. Social housing providers in Tasmania are defined in the social housing policy.

Eligibility for Aboriginal housing

Applications for Aboriginal housing are made through Housing Connect and applications are placed on the Housing Register as the single access point for social housing in Tasmania.

To be eligible for Aboriginal housing, at least one household member must have confirmed eligibility as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person as outlined in [Eligibility for Tasmanian Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services](#).

Applicants are required to complete an eligibility form or be found eligible under the previous *Tasmanian Government Policy on Eligibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific programs and services*.

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander applicant/s must also meet other eligibility requirements for social housing including:

- live in Tasmania, not another state or territory
- be an Australian citizen
- be 16 years or older
- be a low-income earner who is 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 like cars or household items.

Housing Connect may use discretion for applicants to be eligible for social housing if they are experiencing exceptional circumstances (such as family violence) and do not meet some eligibility criteria (such as income and asset limits).

Assessing need for Aboriginal housing

Housing Connect will assess the level and urgency of need and determine the priority of need for Aboriginal housing.

Prioritisation for Aboriginal housing is based on five factors:

- housing circumstances
- family/cultural factors
- family violence
- health and functional ability and
- affordability.

Specific points are allocated under each of these five factors and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander applicants will be prioritised on the Housing Register as either Category A, B or C according to their level of need.

Allocation of Aboriginal housing

Aboriginal Tenancy Allocation Panels (ATAPs) provide culturally appropriate information, recommendations and assistance to the decision to allocate Aboriginal housing properties.

There are three regional ATAPs in Tasmania: North-West, North and South. Each ATAP comprises of up to five members, including the Chair. The ATAPs meet when a social housing provider has a vacant Aboriginal housing property available for allocation. The meeting is convened and attended by a representative from the relevant social housing provider.

The ATAPs recommend property allocations to the social housing provider by considering the applicant's circumstances and assessment of housing need, suburb preferences and wait time.

The social housing provider is responsible for the decision to make an application, for communicating the decision to the ATAP and to making housing offers to the applicant where approved.

ATAPs may also consider transfer applications for Aboriginal housing.

Tenancy and property management

Tenancy and property management for Aboriginal housing is undertaken by the relevant social housing provider in line with the Social Housing Policy and any relevant policies and procedures.

Tenancy and property management for Aboriginal housing should be undertaken with appropriate cultural awareness. Cross-cultural awareness programs should be made available to staff working with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people to promote culturally sensitive service provision.

Property exchanges or disposal

Occasionally there may be the need to exchange or dispose of an Aboriginal housing property.

If there are no Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander applicants available to allocate to a vacant Aboriginal property, social housing providers may identify an appropriate social housing applicant. The vacant property may be transferred from an Aboriginal property to a mainstream allocation.

A suitable Aboriginal replacement property in another location where there is demand will be identified as soon as possible and made available for allocation to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander applicant. This will result in better housing outcomes or better use of properties based on current demand.

If there is no appropriate social housing applicant after all avenues have been exhausted (such as applicants with suburb preferences in close proximity) the social housing provider may refer the property for assessment by Portfolio and Supply, Homes Tasmania, for strategic asset management assessment on whether the property should be sold or used for another purpose.

Any exchange or disposal of Aboriginal properties is undertaken in consultation with the regional ATAP and Homes Tasmania to ensure the dedicated portfolio of Aboriginal properties is maintained.

Relevant documents

The social housing policy is available on the Homes Tasmania website - www.homes.tasmania.com.au/engage/Information-for-Partners/fact-sheets

For more information

Housing Connect

Call 1800 800 588 during business hours.

Email housingconnect@homes.tas.gov.au

Help to get information

TTY users phone 133 677, then ask for 1300 135 513.

Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 1300 135 513.

Internet relay users connect to the NRS then ask for 1300 135 513.