Aboriginal Housing Victoria

Housing Services Manual

Chapter 2 – Applications, eligibility and waiting list management

DOCUMENT CONTROL	
Policy	Housing Services: allocations, eligibility and waiting list management
Policy number	HSM15/2
Date of issue	November 2017
Last reviewed	October 2017
Version	4.1
Responsible Department	Director of Operations

Chapter 2

Applications, eligibility assessment and waiting list management

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Chapter 2
Applications, eligibility assessment and waiting list management -Policy and context

1.1 Purpose

This chapter outlines Aboriginal Housing Victoria's eligibility criteria for housing and the application approval process, including priority housing for households in urgent need of housing.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to any person who lodges an application for housing with Aboriginal Housing Victoria.

The Priority Housing policy applies to applicants in urgent housing need.

1.3 Context

Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) aims to provide appropriate, affordable and secure housing assistance for low-income Aboriginal people living in Victoria.

AHV actively manages its waiting list to ensure that Aboriginal households are matched to properties that will meet their particular housing requirements and those in urgent need of accommodation are offered early housing. AHV also seeks to assist potentially vulnerable families and households by facilitating links to appropriate support services. This may include support to obtain alternative housing until their turn is reached for AHV housing and to successfully maintain future AHV tenancies.

AHV optimises the use of the rental properties that it owns and those it manages on behalf of the Director of Housing (DoH), by applying housing size guidelines to determine the appropriate number of bedrooms for each household.

Approved applications are placed on waiting lists that match AHV's *Housing size guidelines* and the applicant's preferred area/s.

1.4. Cultural statement

The First Nations people of Australia have the oldest continuous cultures in the world. AHV celebrates and takes pride in the rich and spiritual culture, values and practices of Australia's First Nations people. We celebrate the significant contribution made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture to the enrichment of Victorian society, and, we acknowledge and respect the special place of Victorian traditional owners as Victoria's First Nations peoples.

As an Aboriginal Community Organisation we acknowledge that our legitimacy is derived from the strong relationships we have with Victoria's Aboriginal communities and our success is through achievement of our shared vision and aspirations.

Our vision is that **Aboriginal Victorians secure appropriate, affordable housing as a pathway to better lives and stronger communities.**

We believe that achievement of our vision is through the provision of housing services which enhance the dignity of our clients and tenants and which respects and celebrates their cultural beliefs, values and practices.

Our policies and procedures are designed so that our practice and service delivery is in accord with this cultural statement.

1.5 Relevant legislative and regulation

- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006
- Housing Act 1983

1.6 Organisational context

Relevant AHV values that underpin our application and waiting list management policies include:

Respect and support for Aboriginal identity and culture and for our tenants and stakeholders

Integrity, trust and honesty in all our business activities

Collaborative relationships with our community, tenants, government and stakeholders

Kindness, compassion, courtesy and dignity in our relationships with our clients, our stakeholders and with each other.

Relevant AHV strategic objectives are to:

- Provide efficient and effective housing services for Aboriginal people;
- Develop constructive and mutually beneficial partnerships and relationships with the housing, community and corporate sectors;
- Develop best practice community and tenancy engagement;
- Advocate for, influence and deliver improvements in Aboriginal housing and other outcomes;
- Maintain high standards of accountability, probity and transparency to tenants, clients, the Aboriginal community, government and the public.

1.7. Key stakeholders

- Clients and prospective tenants
- Aboriginal Victorians, Aboriginal organisations, other community organisations and government agencies that have an interest in the delivery and outcomes of this policy.

1.8 Other relevant contextual factors

AHV is part of the social/community housing sector in Victoria. The sector provides long-term, secure rental accommodation to low-middle income Victorians through a large and diverse range of not-for-profit organisations. Community housing is highly regulated by government and as a social housing agency, AHV must comply with sector performance standards and demonstrate the capacity to manage a viable social housing business. Performance standards include allocating rental housing properties using processes that are fair and transparent.

1.9 Policy objectives

This policy aims to achieve the delivery of fair and responsive waiting list management services to eligible Aboriginal people who require safe, secure and affordable housing of a good standard.

AHV recognises that Victoria's Aboriginal households have varying needs for access to affordable and appropriate housing, and that these needs can change over time. AHV makes provision for priority housing allocations for both new applicants and current tenants in order to ensure that those most in need receive the earliest assistance.

AHV is committed to improving the delivery of its housing services and listens to the service concerns of new applicants and current tenants. Applicants are advised of their right to appeal decisions relating to their eligibility for AHV housing.

1.10 Responsibilities

Allocations Officer	Lead role in managing the waiting list
Asset Team Leader	Provides supervision and support to Property Services staff
Board	Approves the policy, sets strategy, monitors policy implementation and performance, and, reviews policy when necessary
CEO with the Executive Management	Oversees and monitors policy implementation and approves procedures to implement the policy
Director of Operations	Administers the policy and ensures staff and contractors comply with the policy
Housing Officer	Provides information to current and prospective clients. Undertakes home inspections as required to assist assessment of applications.
Team Leader Client Services	Day to day supervision and support to Allocations/Housing staff in the delivery of waiting list management services

1.11 Definitions

Aboriginal person	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person
AHV	Aboriginal Housing Victoria
ATAR	Aboriginal Tenants at Risk program. The ATAR program delivers a range of services including support and advocacy to Aboriginal tenants in public and community housing. The program supports people experiencing housing and homelessness crisis and provides referral and advice to homeless people.
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
Corrections Victoria	A business unit of the Department of Justice and Regulation responsible for overseeing Victoria's corrections system.

CRN	Centrelink Reference Number
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services. The Victorian State Government authority responsible for the planning, funding and delivery of a range of public health, housing and community services.
DoH	Director of Housing. The DoH is a body corporate created under the *Housing Act 1983*. The DoH is the owner of public housing stock in Victoria and provides indirect funding to housing agencies to deliver social housing services.
Eviction for non-tenancy breaches	For the purposes of eligibility assessment, eviction for non-tenancy breaches means where AHV had previously: • obtained an Order for Possession for a non-arrears tenancy breach, such as anti-social behaviour and the tenant then vacated the premises, either as a result of, or prior to the execution of a warrant, or • issued an Immediate Notice to Vacate for dangerous behaviour or malicious damage , and either an Order of Possession was granted or the case was not heard at VCAT because the tenant vacated prior to the hearing date.
Full disability modifications	A fully-modified property which is wheelchair accessible. In addition to the modifications required for the 'Major' category, this category would also include full kitchen and laundry modifications, to enable a person in a wheelchair to live independently.
HO	Housing Officer
Major disability modifications	Includes: disability modified (stepless) shower, disability modified toilet, wheel chair access to some parts of the property, electric wheelchair charging bay, internal fire safety sprinkler system, and structural reinforcement for bathroom and bedroom hoists. Generally, does not include kitchen or laundry modifications as it is expected that a carer will provide assistance with meal preparation and laundry.
Minor disability modifications	Includes modifications that can generally be made to all AHV properties: handrails, grab-rails, modified taps, hand held shower sets, step in shower, shower/bath seat, lowered hand basin, lowered benches or shelves, relocation of power outlets or light switches, lowered rails in wardrobes, additional hard-wired smoke detectors and door handles.
HO	Housing Officer
Non-arrears tenancy breaches	Relevant breaches are: • Malicious damage to premises • Endangering the safety of occupiers of neighbouring premises • Use of premises for illegal purposes • Breach of duty – serious nuisance (antisocial behaviour)

Notice to Vacate (NTV)	A legal notice to the tenant to vacate the rented premises, issued by a landlord under Part 6, subdivision 4 of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*.
Public housing	Government owned and managed rental housing for low income Victorians.
Residential Tenancies Agreement	An agreement signed between landlords and tenants at the commencement of the tenancy, which specifies terms and conditions in accordance with the RTA.
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program. A joint Commonwealth/State government funded program that provides transitional accommodation and a range of related support services to help people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness, including people escaping family violence.
SDM	AHV's housing services electronic record system.
Statute of Limitations	A debt may be statute barred (that is, too old to pursue) because the *Limitations of Actions Act 1958* places a limit on the time a creditor is able to take legal action to recover a debt.
THM	Transitional Housing Manager. Provider of transitional housing and related support services under through the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program.
TRMC	Tenant responsibility maintenance compensation. Compensation claimed by AHV in circumstances where tenants are responsible for damage to AHV properties.
VCAT	Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The jurisdiction which includes the Residential Tenancy List.
VHR	Victorian Housing Register. The statewide common application for people seeking social housing , which can be accessed via participating community housing agencies, DHHS, the mygov portal or designated support providers.

1.12 Policy details - AHV waiting list

Individuals or households are required to lodge their application for housing by either completing the AHV application form or by marking their interest on their application form for public housing.

Applications can be lodged in person at an AHV office or by mail. The 'effective date' of the application is the date that it is received at AHV.

If the application is complete and all required documentation is provided, the application is assessed within 28 working days from the date that AHV receives the application.

Matching applicants with housing size and location is based on the following:

- AHV *Housing size guidelines*;
- consideration of any special accommodation requirements, such as access to particular location requirements, property access needs or property construction type for medical reasons; and
- availability of housing in the applicant's preferred area/s.

To be approved to the AHV waiting list, applications are assessed against the following eligibility criteria:

- confirmation of Aboriginality for at least one permanent household member;
- confirmation of identity for all household members;
- income and assets including ownership of real estate;
- minimum age requirement for an applicant;
- Victorian residency;
- outstanding charges to AHV incurred during current or previous tenancies;
- during the previous 12 months, the applicant(s) and/or household member(s) were not evicted as a tenant of an AHV property for non-arrears tenancy breaches.

1.12.3 Confirmation of Aboriginality

Aboriginal identity can be confirmed in a number of ways. These include:

- provision of a Certificate of Aboriginality from a recognised Aboriginal community organisation (which includes a document that has a Common Seal);
- applicant/household member is known to AHV to be an Aboriginal person.

If an applicant/household member cannot confirm their Aboriginality through the above processes, AHV will accept an application if the applicant provides a statement from a recognised Aboriginal community

organisation, confirming that the applicant has approached the organisation to seek a Certificate of Aboriginality but the request has not yet been processed.

Where the applicant/household member has not approached relevant agencies to seek a Certificate of Aboriginality, and/or does not have evidence to confirm Aboriginality, AHV provides information on services that may be able to assist them, including the Aboriginal Advancement League, local Aboriginal cooperatives, and the Koorie Family History Service (Koorie Heritage Trust).

AHV accepts the application subject to appropriate documentation being available to confirm Aboriginality prior to allocation of AHV housing.

1.12.4 Confirmation of identity

AHV requires proof of identity for all household members included on the application.

Applicants in prison

Applicants or household members currently in prison are eligible to apply for AHV housing.

AHV recognises that it may be difficult for prisoners to provide proof of identification. Where the prison liaison officer confirms that the applicant/household member is unable to provide standard forms of identification, alternative forms of identification may be accepted. In these circumstances the applicant/household member is required to provide standard proof of identification to AHV, following release from prison.

1.12.5 Income criteria

For the purposes of assessing income eligibility, applicants must provide income information for all household members receiving an income.

Applicants who receive Centrelink incomes have the option to authorise AHV to obtain the information directly from Centrelink.

AHV amends its income and asset limits annually, in line with the eligibility limits set by the Director of Housing (DoH).

All household income (other than specific purpose payments) is included when calculating household income eligibility.

1.12.6 Asset limit criteria

AHV assesses the value of realisable assets for the entire household to determine eligibility for housing. If households have assets that would enable them to afford other forms of long term housing, e.g. renting in the private market for a ten year period, they are not eligible for AHV rental housing.

Consistent with DoH asset limits for public housing, the general AHV asset limit for households is $30,000. The asset limit for households who require major or full disability modifications is $60,000.

1.12.7 Ownership of real estate

An applicant or other household member who owns or has an interest in real estate of a value exceeding the asset limit, is generally ineligible for AHV rental housing. However the application may be approved if the applicant/household cannot make 'effective use' of the property because:

- it is not possible for the household to reside in the property or to continue to reside in the property; and
- the property is 'unrealisable', that is, it is not possible to sell their equity in the real estate.

1.12.8 Victorian residency

Applicants for housing are generally required to be current residents of Victoria. However AHV accepts applications from people living in other states who can provide a contact address in Victoria and who need to return to Victoria for family/kinship reunification, employment, medical, and/or education reasons, or to escape family violence.

Applicants residing outside Victoria do not need to provide a Victorian address if they reside within 10 kilometres of the Victorian border.

1.12.9 Minimum age requirements

Generally applicants for AHV rental housing must be 18 years and over. Applications from applicants 17 years of age and under may only be approved to the waiting list by the Director of Operations or delegate.

Applications from applicants aged less than 15 years may be approved by the Director of Operations where:

- the applicant's Child Protection worker provides written advice that no other housing arrangements are in place, and
- the applicant receives an independent income.

1.12.10 Outstanding charges

Applicants and other household members who have outstanding charges may be approved to the waiting list. Outstanding charges include both tenant responsibility maintenance compensation (TRMC) and rental arrears. An offer of housing can be made when the application reaches the top of the waiting list. However all outstanding charges must be paid before AHV will enter into a Residential Tenancy Agreement with the applicant.

Transfer applications

Existing AHV tenants who want to transfer to another property must meet the general housing eligibility criteria as outlined above. Any rent and/or substantiated TRMCs incurred during the tenancy must be repaid before a transfer can occur and a new Residential Tenancies Agreement signed.

Bankruptcy

Applicants or other household members who have outstanding charges that are subject to bankruptcy may have their applications approved to the waiting list.

When a person is declared bankrupt, any outstanding charges up to the date they were declared bankrupt are not recoverable by AHV, and will not be required to be repaid prior to signing a further tenancy agreement. However any outstanding charges accrued after that date must be paid in full prior to the commencement of a new tenancy agreement. Refer to the Chapter 4 *Tenancy management* for further information.

The Statute of Limitations

AHV is unable to actively pursue statute barred debts in a court or tribunal. However, AHV policy requires household members who were former AHV tenants to pay all outstanding charges in full, or their portion of the outstanding charge, prior to being re-housed.

1.12.11 Underutilisation

To ensure the most appropriate use of its property portfolio, AHV seeks to identify properties that are underutilised by:

- checking property size against household composition for high demand property types;
- checking transfer applicants' household income;
- checking transfer applications when they are submitted;
- checking rental subsidy applications when they are submitted; and
- by recording information gained during home visits and inspections.

Once underutilisation has been established, AHV seeks to contact the tenant to discuss their interest in transferring and whether the property type, size and location to which they wish to transfer is likely to become available. If the tenant of an underutilised property expresses the wish to remain in their current property, a record of the contact is made on the relevant tenancy file.

1.12.12 Other tenancy breaches

AHV does not approve applications for housing for a period of twelve months from the date a previous tenancy was terminated where:

- AHV obtained an Order for Possession for a non-arrears tenancy breach, such as serious nuisance or illegal use of premises; or
- AHV issued an Immediate Notice to Vacate for dangerous behaviour or malicious damage under s243 or 244 of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* (RTA), and either an Order of Possession was granted or the case was not heard at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) as the tenant vacated prior to the hearing date.

This policy applies to any household members listed on the application.

The application may be resubmitted when the waiting period expires or earlier if the ineligible applicant/household member is removed from the application. If the ineligible applicant/household member is removed from the application and then included on the application at a later date, the effective date of the application will be reduced by the relevant waiting period (that is, 12-months less the period of time between the tenancy termination date and the original application date).

1.12.13 Mutual Swaps

Eligible AHV tenants may swap their current property with other AHV tenants. Refer to Chapter 5 *Tenant-initiated changes* for further information on eligibility requirements for mutual swaps.

1.12.14 Carers

Carers who live with the applicant on a permanent basis and are eligible for AHV housing are included on the application.

Carers who live with the applicant on a permanent basis, but are ineligible for housing are also included on the application. Following allocation of an AHV property, ineligible carers have the status of a resident. If the applicant leaves the property the carer/resident will also be required to leave.

Rostered attendant carers are not included as residents on the application.

AHV offers an extra bedroom to applicants who require full time live-in care.

1.13 Policy details - Priority access

AHV's priority access policy facilitates out of turn assistance to applicants in urgent housing need. AHV aims to improve an applicant's living circumstances by:

- providing a safer living environment compared to their current accommodation; or
- providing more appropriate housing to improve their health and well-being, or to overcome a situation of serious overcrowding; or
- preventing the household from an imminent risk of becoming homeless; or
- providing secure housing to an applicant who is experiencing homelessness.

In addition to the standard AHV eligibility criteria, applicants may be considered for priority access, if they meet one or more of the following VHR priority access categories:

- Emergency management housing, where housing is no longer safe or habitable due to an emergency, e.g. bushfire, flood or storm;
- Priority transfers, including family violence and other safety issues, stock utilisation, family reunification, uninhabitable housing, property disposal, major redevelopment/upgrade;
- Homeless with support, including family violence, homelessness;
- Supported housing, including requirements for major disability modification and/or significant personal support;
- Special housing needs, including insecure housing, inappropriate housing (severe overcrowding, unsuitable housing, family reunification), unsafe housing (family violence, serious threat of violence, urgent medical needs);
- Special housing needs aged 55 years and over.

Priority access applications are generally assessed against priority income and asset limits, as defined by the VHR priority access eligibility policy, with some exceptions. Exceptions include higher income and asset limits for priority transfers due to insecure, unsafe or inappropriate housing, or major redevelopment/upgrades. Increased asset limits apply for applicants requiring disability modifications.

1.13.1 Other housing options

Given the high demand for AHV accommodation, new applicants seeking approval for priority access may need to explore alternative housing options, including private rental. Where appropriate, AHV may refer clients to homelessness intake and access support services (or equivalent) to assist them to make application for priority or to investigate alternative housing options.

Vulnerable Aboriginal households continue to face specific barriers to obtaining suitable housing. It is therefore inappropriate to require then to provide evidence of efforts to find alternative housing, if their circumstances/rental histories indicate that private rental is not a realistic option.

1.13.2 Priority housing income limits

AHV applies the VHR income eligibility limits for social housing. The income eligibility limit for priority access is based on income eligibility limits for a Commonwealth Low Income Health Care Card.

Applicants are not required to meet the Priority Housing category income limits if a member of the household requires major or full modifications to their property. In these circumstances, applicants are required to meet AHV general housing income limits eligibility criteria.

Applicants applying for priority transfers must meet VHR register of interest eligibility limits for social housing. The income eligibility limit for a register of interest application for social housing is based on income eligibility limits for Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

Current income limits for priority access and register of interest applications can be found at:

http://www.housing.vic.gov.au/social-housing-income-and-asset-limits

Total household incomes are combined when assessing income eligibility.

1.13.3 Asset limits for priority access

AHV applies the VHR asset eligibility limits for social housing. The asset limit is based on the estimated costs of maintaining housing in the private rental market.

The assessable assets of all household members are added together to determine whether the household meets the asset eligibility limit.

Where one or more household members require full or major modifications to the property, the disability modification asset limit applies.

Applicants applying for priority transfers must meet VHR register of interest asset limits for social housing.

Households applying for priority access under the 'Special housing needs" category may be exempt from the priority access asset limit if they have significant personal support needs. In these circumstances, the register of interest asset limits apply.

Current asset limits for priority access and register of interest applications can be found at:

http://www.housing.vic.gov.au/social-housing-income-and-asset-limits

1.13.4 Existing tenants who vacate due to serious health/safety issues

Tenants approved for a priority access transfer may, as a matter of necessity, move into emergency accommodation. If confirmation is provided by the Police or relevant community agency, that the tenant was required to leave the premises for serious health/safety reasons, the tenant's existing priority transfer status is maintained, regardless of the tenant's decision to retain or terminate the tenancy.

1.13.5 Outstanding charges – priority housing

New and transfer applicants with outstanding charges may be approved to the Priority Housing category. However, all outstanding charges (both rental and TRMC) must be paid in full before AHV will enter into a Residential Tenancy Agreement with the applicant.

However, new and transfer applicants applying for Priority Housing who have outstanding charges and are experiencing family violence, and/or physical danger are not required to repay charges in full before signing a new tenancy agreement. In these cases, a repayment agreement must be negotiated at the time of application and the agreement must be maintained prior to an offer of housing being made, and a new Residential Tenancy Agreement commencing.

1.14 Policy details –Matching clients with housing

1.14.1 Number of bedrooms

When determining the appropriate number of bedrooms, AHV applies the following principles for both new and transfer applications:

- residents 18 years and over are entitled to their own room. They include children aged 18 years and over, grandparents, uncles and aunts, and non-related adults;
- siblings of different genders are not required to share a bedroom regardless of age;
- children of the same gender within a household containing two separate family units are able to share bedrooms (e.g. adult A + child 1 reside with adult B + child 2. Child 1 and 2 can share a bedroom if they are the same gender and both under 18 years);
- a bedroom is allocated to each individual in a same sex couple. However, same sex couples may opt to request smaller accommodation;
- children of the same gender who have an age differential of 5 years or more are entitled to a separate room.

On the basis of these principles, households are matched to property size, as outlined in the AHV *Housing Size Guidelines*.

The composition and eligibility of the household is reassessed prior to an offer of housing being made and also before AHV enters into a Residential Tenancy Agreement with the applicant.

Applicants may nominate accommodation with fewer bedrooms than the number calculated using the AHV *Housing Size Guidelines*. Following acceptance of a smaller property, the household will not be eligible for a priority transfer on the grounds of unsuitable housing or severe overcrowding. However, an application may be lodged for a general housing transfer to a larger property.

AHV provides separate/extra bedroom(s) if:

- a single applicant, couple or their dependants require a separate bedroom due to a serious medical condition or for storage of medical equipment that is unable to be accommodated elsewhere in the property;
- an applicant requires a separate bedroom for a full-time live-in carer;
- the applicant or household member is pregnant and:
    - presently has no children; or
    - is aware of the gender of their expected child and the expected child's gender entitles the household to an extra bedroom according to the AHV *Housing size guidelines*; or
    - regardless of the expected child's gender, the household is entitled to an extra bedroom according to the AHV *Housing size guidelines*, eg, a household presently with two young girls would be entitled to an extra bedroom for a third child;

- couples without children intend to start a family;
- non-custodial parents have regular child access arrangements (a minimum of 21 percent of the year or every second weekend plus half of the school and public holidays);
- foster carers can demonstrate that on average, they are required to look after foster children for at least 21 percent of the year.

1.14.2 Housing type

Applicants or other household members with medical and/or mobility restrictions are offered housing that is suitable for their medical/mental health condition or disability. For example, an applicant who cannot regularly climb more than one flight of stairs will not be offered properties above the first floor, unless a lift is available. In other cases, specific amenity or housing features may be required, eg no carpet (serious allergies) or a private driveway or parking bay to assist mobility.

1.14.3 Assessing housing availability

When matching applicants to waiting lists, AHV considers the applicant's preferences, their particular circumstances and any approved exemptions, against the relative demand for the size of housing and waiting list areas nominated. The assessment is based on the demand for, and turnover of stock within the nominated area.

AHV recognises that its stock profile does not always provide for appropriately sized housing to be offered for smaller households. In some cases, applications may be approved to waiting lists for housing larger than the size calculated using AHV *Housing size guidelines,* if:

- appropriately-sized stock is not available; and
- alternative areas are inappropriate; and
- applicants are prepared to accept larger housing.

1.14.4 Waiting list management

Applications are placed on the waiting list based on the relevant housing category and their effective date.

Applications approved for priority housing are placed in order of their priority housing allocation category and the date of approval for priority housing.

General housing applications are placed in effective date order after all priority housing categories.

AHV maintains contact with applicants on the waiting list and questionnaires may be sent to applicants at any time, seeking current information on household composition and eligibility.

Confirming and updating the information on applications maintains the integrity and currency of the waiting list, and ensures that vacancy periods for AHV properties are not extended unnecessarily due to inappropriate offers of accommodation.

1.14.5 Changes to household circumstances

Once approved, a household's circumstances and housing needs may change during the period that their application is on the waiting list.

Only the primary applicant may make changes to a housing application.

In some circumstances, applicants may choose to withdraw or defer their application, or they may be assessed as no longer being eligible for housing. In these circumstances, AHV removes the application from the waiting list.

The application may be reinstated to the waiting list within 2 years of removal, if the household's eligibility for AHV housing is confirmed at the time of the request for reinstatement of the application. In these circumstances, the original effective date of the application is retained.

1.15 Change history

Version	Approval date	Approved by	Changes	Review Date
1	2008			2012
2	July 2012	AHV Board		2015
3	June 2015		Updated policy template	
4	September 2015	AHV Board	Consolidation and standard format of Tenancy Services Manual	2016
5	November 2017	AHV Board	Consistency with VHR guidelines	2019

Chapter 2
Applications, eligibility and waiting list management Procedures

2.1 Receiving and registering applications

If a client requests an application for AHV housing, send an application form with a copy of the *Application checklist* (refer to Appendix 4), so that the client understands what documentation is required to be included with the completed application.

When receiving an AHV rental housing application:

- stamp the application with the date it is received. The effective date of the application is the date the application is received at AHV as per the incoming mail register;
- register the application on the waiting list database (SDM) within 14 days of receipt, regardless of whether all necessary documentation is provided with the application. Refer to SDM User Manual at:

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- check if the applicant has been a client of AHV in the past. If the applicant has been a previous client, check their previous tenancy history for any outstanding charges; and
- create a hard copy file and attach all provided documentation.

2.2 Former tenants with outstanding charges

Check if the applicant and/or any household member has had a previous AHV tenancy, and if there are any outstanding charges (rent arrears, Tenant Responsibility Maintenance Compensation (TRMC)).

If there are outstanding charges, write to the applicant to advise that:

- there are outstanding charges from a previous tenancy (confirm the property address, the type of charges and the outstanding amount);
- the application will be approved to the waiting list and an offer of housing may be made when the application reaches the top of the list, however AHV will not enter into a new tenancy agreement until charges are paid in full; and
- it is in the applicant/household member's interest to enter into an agreement to repay the charges while they wait to be re-housed (Refer to the Chapter 4 *Tenancy management* chapter of this manual for further details on rental arrears and TRMC policy and procedures).

2.2.1 Bankruptcy

If the applicant has been declared bankrupt, AHV does not require repayment of any charges incurred during the period of bankruptcy. Advise the applicant that:

- documentation is required confirming they have been declared bankrupt and the dates that the period of bankruptcy applies. Documentation may include:
    - notification from the Receiver's Office;
    - notice to creditors;
    - Statement of Affairs;
    - Certificate of Discharge.

2.3 12-month waiting period for non-arrears tenancy breaches

If any household member is identified as a former AHV tenant and subject to the 12-month waiting period for eviction from an AHV property for a non-arrears tenancy breach, do not proceed with registering the application.

In these circumstances, eviction for non-arrears tenancy breaches is defined as:

- AHV obtained an Order for Possession for a non-arrears tenancy breach, such as anti-social behaviour and the tenant then vacated the premises, either as a result of, or prior to the execution of a warrant, or
- AHV issued an Immediate Notice to Vacate for dangerous behaviour or malicious damage, and either an Order of Possession was granted or the case was not heard at VCAT as the tenant vacated prior to the hearing date; and
- the date the tenancy was terminated was less than 12 months ago.

Write to the applicant advising them that:

- the applicant/household member is not eligible to be included on an application for AHV housing until the 12-month waiting period has expired because the applicant/household member was a former AHV tenant evicted for non-arrears tenancy breaches. Advise the applicant of the date of expiry of the waiting period based on 12-months from the date the applicant/ household member's previous tenancy was terminated); and
- the application may be resubmitted when the waiting period expires or earlier if the ineligible applicant/household member is removed from the application; and
- if the ineligible applicant/household member is removed from the application and then included on the application at a later date, the effective date of the application will be reduced by the relevant waiting period (that is, 12-months less the period of time between the tenancy termination date and the original application date).

2.4 Confirmation of Aboriginality

Check that confirmation of Aboriginality has been provided for at least one permanent household member. Aboriginal identity is confirmed in a number of ways, including:

- provision of a Certificate of Aboriginality from a recognised Aboriginal community organisation (which includes a document that has a common seal);
- confirmation from the Aboriginal Community that the household member is recognised as an Aboriginal person; or
- confirmation by AHV that the applicant is known to be an Aboriginal person.

Accept the application if the applicant provides a statement from a recognised Aboriginal community organisation, confirming that the applicant has approached the organisation to seek a Certificate of Aboriginality but the request has not yet been processed.

Advise the applicant that a copy of the Certificate of Aboriginality must be provided to AHV, once the request has been processed by the Aboriginal community organisation and a certificate obtained.

If the applicant/household member has not approached relevant agencies to seek a Certificate of Aboriginality, and/or does not have evidence to confirm Aboriginality:

- provide information on services that may be able to assist the applicant, including:
  - the Aboriginal Advancement League;
  - local Aboriginal cooperatives; and
  - the Koorie Family History Service (Koorie Heritage Trust).

Accept the application, but advise the applicant in writing that:

- a future allocation of AHV housing will be subject to appropriate documentation being provided to confirm Aboriginality.

2.5 Proof of identity

Check that proof of identity has been supplied for all household members.

Wherever possible obtain photographic ID (eg driver's licence, passport). If applicants advise that they do not have photographic ID, other forms of ID must be provided, such as:

- Centrelink/Social Security card;
- Medicare card; and
- credit card.

A Medicare card and/or relevant statement from Centrelink can be used to confirm identification of dependent children.

The application form makes reference to the need for applicants to provide 2 forms of documentation to confirm ID of all household members.

Refer to documentation provided for other sections of the application to establish confirmation of identification, for example Centrelink statements, bank statements.

2.5.1 Applicants in prison

If the applicant or a household member is in prison at the time the application is lodged, proof of identification may be more difficult to obtain.

Where the prisoner liaison officer advises that the prisoner cannot provide identification such as a driver's licence, the following can be accepted as proof of identity:

- a photo identity card issued by the prison or remand centre; or
- a signed letter from a Corrections Victoria worker (or relevant prison outreach worker) confirming the applicant's full name, date of birth, and earliest release date. The letter should also include the worker's full name and contact details.

Advise the applicant/household member that:

- the application will be approved to the waiting list (assuming all other eligibility criteria are met); and
- it will be necessary to supply standard proof of identity to AHV, upon release from prison.

2.6 Income

Applicants must have an 'independent income' to be eligible for AHV rental housing. An independent income is an income paid directly to the person for their use and which is not subject to a parental income or parental assets test.

Check the eligibility of group households or extended families on the basis of the combined household income.

If Centrelink income is the only income received by each household member, the household is considered income eligible even though their total dollar income amount may exceed the household income limit for the relevant household size.

Where an applicant is not receiving a Centrelink benefit or pension to which they are entitled:

- impute this amount to determine income eligibility unless the applicant can provide documentation from Centrelink confirming that they are not entitled to the pension/benefit.

Where an applicant's Centrelink income is temporarily reduced due to an activity test or administrative breach:

- assess eligibility assessment on the basis of the applicant's full Centrelink entitlement.

Where a non-custodial parent has regular access visits from their children for at least 21 percent of the year (every second weekend and half school holidays constitutes 21 percent of the year).

- apply the relevant single person with dependants income limit; and.
- include any income received by dependants less than 18 years of age.

Check that:

- income and supporting information matches each household member's circumstances; and
- the Centrelink Reference Number (CRN) is available for all household members receiving Centrelink payments.

If the applicant is receiving a Centrelink income:

- ask if s/he is willing to provide written authorisation to AHV to obtain the information directly from Centrelink, and if so;
- provide the applicant with a copy of the authorisation form (see Appendix 7) and ask her/him to complete and return the form.

The types of income and associated documentation requirements are detailed in the following table:

Type of Income	**Information/documentation**
Pension or allowance (e.g. Centrelink payment, Austudy, overseas pension)	Current information (letter or statement and no more than two weeks old) from Centrelink, the Department of Veterans' Affairs and/or the overseas pension organisation.
Wages or maintenance	Income statement or consecutive pay slips showing the date and total gross amount paid over the last 13 weeks by the employers. Seasonal workers must provide current information that confirms the income they are receiving at the time of application. Information from Centrelink, Child Support Agency or a Family Court Order showing weekly maintenance payments received.
WorkCover or Superannuation payments	A current letter from WorkCover or the superannuation institution detailing the regular payments received.

Self employed	13 week Profit and Loss statement Evidence of all other income including the most recent 8 week bank statement. Applicants who participate in the Income Confirmation Service do not need to provide a separate letter or statement from the source of the income.
Other Income	Documentation providing details of the type of income, amount received, period of payment, source of income etc.

Detailed lists of assessable and non-assessable incomes, for the purposes of AHV eligibility are provided in Appendix 1.

If the income information received does not match the household's entitlement, inform the applicant that the application:

- is incomplete (include details of documentation that must be submitted); and
- cannot be approved until required income documentation is provided.

2.6.1 No income

Applications listing independent household members who do not receive any income are approved to the waiting list, if they meet all other eligibility criteria. In these circumstances, advise applicants that documentation from Centrelink is required stating:

- why the applicant/household member is not entitled to or in receipt of an income; or
- that they are entitled to an income but are not claiming it.

Advise the applicant that a future AHV tenancy cannot commence until the applicant or household member can supply documentation confirming receipt of an independent income.

2.7 Assets

Where ownership of assets is indicated on the application, check:

- that appropriate documentation has been supplied and the documentation:
  - matches the assessable assets listed on the application; and
  - confirms the value of the asset(s), eg bank statement, share certificate, property valuation; and
- if the assets produce an income, eg, dividends from shares, bank interest. If so, include this income in the calculation of the household's assessable income.

2.7.1 Assessing eligibility for property owners

Applicants or household members who own or have equity in a property may be eligible for AHV housing if the property cannot be put to effective use. Examples include:

- The person cannot or should not occupy the property for medical or health and safety reasons and they are experiencing difficulty selling the property. For example, the person is a police witness and is at risk if they remain in the property, or the property is unsuitable for a person with mobility difficulties.

- The property is part of a contested property settlement and the household member cannot occupy it or sell their equity.

In these circumstances advise the applicant or other household member that they must provide documentation that is appropriate to their circumstances such as:

- details of their interest in the property and why they are unable to occupy it; and/or

- documentation confirming they have been unable to sell the property, eg statement from an approved valuer advising of the market value of the property and documentation showing that a real estate agency or the applicant/other household member is attempting to sell the property with a reserve price of no more than the market value; and/or

- documentation to support a claim that real estate cannot be realised, such as a letter from a solicitor or financial institution.

Do not include the property in the assessment of the household's assets if:

- an applicant or other household member can provide independent documentation confirming that they are unable to make effective use of the property and/or unable to realise their equity.

If the applicant receives their interest or share in the real estate prior to being offered housing and their assets are over the AHV's asset limits:

- remove the application from the waiting list; and

- advise the applicant that their application has been removed because they are no longer eligible for AHV housing.

Households who are unable to realise their assets can be approved and housed by AHV. However, advise applicants in these circumstances that:

- they will be reassessed for eligibility for AHV housing every six months to determine whether they:

- can occupy or sell their equity in their own property; or
- meet the AHV's asset limits if that property has been subsequently sold.

- if they do not meet AHV's asset limits for general housing or do not choose to sell their equity in the property, where there is no impediment for them to do so:
  - they may be required to vacate the property; and
  - may be issued with a 120-day Notice to Vacate (NTV), subject to the approval of the CEO.

2.8 Victorian residency

If the applicant has an interstate address, advise them they must provide a contact address in Victoria and documentation confirming that they and/or household member(s):

- have an offer of employment in Victoria; and/or
- are former Victorian residents (normally within the last ten years); and/or
- need to return to Victoria to be reunited with their family;
- need to relocate to Victoria for education purposes; and/or
- have medical reasons for moving to Victoria; and/or
- are escaping family violence.

In the case of applicants/household members accepting an offer of employment, ask the applicant to provide documentation from the prospective employer to confirm that the household income will not exceed AHV income eligibility limits, after employment commences.

Applicants residing within 10 kilometres of the Victorian border do not need to provide a Victorian address, e.g. Moama in New South Wales, Bordertown in South Australia, or Albury in New South Wales.

2.9 Applicants under 18 years

If documentation provided confirms that the applicant is less than 17 years of ages, seek Team Leader Client Services approval to accept the application. If the applicant is under 15 years of age, the application must be approved with the authorisation of the Director of Operations, and only if:

- the applicant's child protection worker provides written advice that no other housing arrangements are in place, and
- the applicant receives an independent income.

Advise the applicant and their legal guardian that if the applicant is still under 15 years of age when an offer of housing is made:

- the legal guardian will be required to attend the office to co-sign the Residential Tenancy Agreement or to sign it on the applicant's behalf.

2.10 Live-in carers

If an applicant or household member requires live-in care, check that documentation from a doctor or support service agency has been provided confirming that full time, ongoing care is required.

If care is provided by a spouse, partner or other family member:

- assess the application in the same way as for other household applications;
- the carer does not have to be receiving a carer's pension from Centrelink.

Carers can be people who are:

- eligible for housing and who will live with the applicant on a permanent basis;
- ineligible for housing and who will live with the applicant on a permanent basis; or
- attendant carers who will be providing full-time care that includes the provision of overnight stays. Attendant carers provide full-time assistance with daily living tasks on a 24 hour roster system every day.

Attendant care can be provided by either rostered carers from an appropriate organisation or by two or more nominated family members.

If the carer lives with the applicant on a permanent basis and is eligible for housing, include the carer on the application and seek relevant ID and income/asset documentation.

If the carer lives with the applicant on a permanent basis, but is ineligible for housing, advise the applicant that:

- the carer will be included in the household as a resident only, and if the applicant leaves the property the carer will also be required to leave.

Do not include rostered attendant carers on applications for housing.

Where live-in carers have household members or dependants who are part of the household on a permanent basis, approve the application to the appropriately-sized waiting list, according to the AHV *Housing size guidelines* (see Appendix 3).

2.11 Complete applications

If the application is complete and the required documentation has been provided, assess the application within **28 working days** from the date AHV received the completed application.

2.12 Incomplete applications

If the application form is not complete or the required documentation has not been included, send a letter to the applicant, and where necessary the incomplete form, advising them:

- that sections of the form are incomplete, and/or
- what documentation they are required to provide, and/or
- that the required information must be returned to AHV within 28 days or their application may be made ineligible.

If the applicant does not return the required documentation within **28 days:**

- send a final letter to the applicant giving them a further 28 days to provide the required documentation.

If only some of the requested documentation is supplied:

- write to the applicant again explaining what is still required; and
- allow the applicant a further 28 days to provide the remaining documentation.

If the documentation is not provided within the required time, make the application ineligible and advise the applicant in writing that:

- their application has been made ineligible;
- the reason that the application is ineligible;
- that they may reapply in the future; and
- enclose information about AHV's *Complaints and appeals* process (see Appendix 6 *Complaints and appeals* brochure).
- Update hard copy file and SMD records. Refer to SDM User Manual at:

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2.13 Duplicate applications

An application received which contains the same primary applicant as an existing application is called a 'duplicate application'. In some cases a duplicate application may occur because the applicant has lodged an AHV application and has also applied for public housing. In these circumstances, the effective date is the earliest date of lodgement.

If a duplicate application is received:

- advise the applicant that they already have a valid application (provide registration number, effective date and waiting list information);
- mark the new application as ineligible (duplicate);
- update the existing application incorporating any new details and documentation supplied with the new application;
- update SDM records. Refer to SDM User Manual at:

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2.14 Ineligible applications

If a new application is assessed as ineligible, advise the applicant in writing within 28 days, that:

- their application is ineligible (provide reasons);
- if the applicant becomes eligible at a later date, a new application can be lodged; and
- enclose information about AHV's *Complaints and appeals* process (see Appendix 6 *Complaints and appeals* brochure).

2.15 Transfer applications

Before a transfer application is approved to the waiting list:

- check the tenant's current account re outstanding rent and/or TRMC, and
- arrange for a HO to inspect the property to ensure there is no tenant related damage which may be the subject of a TRMC.

If there is TRMCs outstanding, the HO must follow the TRMC policy and procedures. Refer to Chapter 4 *Tenancy management* for further information.

Advise the tenant that:

- the application may be approved to the waiting list but a transfer will not occur until all rent arrears/TRMCs are paid; and
- when the application nears the top of the waiting list, a further inspection will be conducted to identify any additional damage, and:
- if further damage is identified, the household cannot be transferred until the damage has been repaired and compensation has been paid as per the TRMC policy.

2.16 Priority housing assessments

2.16.1 Income eligibility

For new applicants, check:

- that the household meets income eligibility limits for a Commonwealth Health Care Card.
- if any member of the household requires major or full modifications to their property, check that the household meets the general income eligibility limits for AHV housing.

For transfer applicants, check that:

- the household meets the general income eligibility limits for AHV housing.

2.16.2 Asset eligibility

For new applicants, check that:

- the value of household assets does not exceed $1,300 (for 1 and 2-bedroom households) or $2,100 for households requiring 3 or more bedrooms.

For transfer applicants, check that:

- the household meets the general asset eligibility limits for AHV housing.

The general asset limit for all household types is $30,000. Where major or full disability modifications are required, the asset limit is $60,000.

If a member of the household (new or transfer) requires major modifications to their property, check that:

- the value of household assets does not exceed $60,000, and
- documentation has been supplied from a relevant health/care professional, e.g. Occupational Therapist, confirming the modifications required.

2.16.2.1 Family violence/threat of serious danger and property ownership

Applicants/household members seeking priority housing in order to escape family violence or a threat of serious danger, and who own or have equity in a property but are unable to realise their assets can be approved for priority housing.

Advise the applicant that:

- following allocation of an AHV property, they will be reassessed for eligibility for AHV housing every six months to determine whether they:
    - can occupy or sell their equity in their own property; or
    - meet the AHV's asset limits if that property has been subsequently sold.

- if they do not meet AHV's asset limits for general housing or do not choose to sell their equity in the property, where there is no impediment for them to do so:
    - they may be required to vacate the property; and
    - may be issued with a 120-day NTV, subject to the approval of the CEO.

2.16.3 Outstanding charges

If new applicants have outstanding charges (rent arrears, TRMC) from a previous AHV tenancy, but meet all other eligibility criteria for priority housing:

- proceed with approval of the application but advise the applicant that all outstanding arrears (both rental and TRMC) must be paid in full prior to an AHV Residential Tenancy Agreement being signed;
- negotiate a repayment agreement with the applicant.

2.16.3.1 Exceptions to repayment requirements

If the applicant is applying for priority housing on the basis of family violence, or threat of serious danger:

- negotiate a repayment at the time the application is approved and advise the applicant that this agreement must be maintained prior to an Residential Tenancy Agreement being signed.

2. 16.4 Priority housing categories

Assess the applicant's eligibility for priority housing against one or more of the following categories:

2.16.4.1 Insecure housing

Check if the applicant is:

- living in transitional housing, emergency housing, or crisis housing; or
- staying temporarily with relatives or friends who are unable to provide longer term housing.

The following documentation from a Transitional Housing Manager (THM), Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) or similar service is required to support the application:

- written confirmation of current housing status, ie:
    - transitional housing;
    - a refuge;
    - emergency housing;

- crisis housing.

- information confirming the household's housing status, including when they arrived at the service, how long they can stay and assistance they are receiving to obtain appropriate housing, including efforts made to obtain private rental utilising the DoH Bond Scheme.

Applicants residing temporarily with relatives or friend must provide documentation from a housing worker and the person with whom they are staying, confirming that:

- they are unable to stay on a long-term basis, the reasons they cannot remain, and when they will have to leave, and

- that the applicant has sought assistance to obtain alternative accommodation but this assistance has not been successful.

If the documentation states that the applicant will not be required to leave until they find suitable alternative housing, advise the applicant that:

- their application does not meet the criteria for Insecure Housing but will be approved to the AHV general waiting list.

In the case of applicants who state they are staying with different friends and family members for short term periods, the applicant must provide:

- a statutory declaration confirming their housing arrangements, and

- documentation from a relevant support worker confirming that the applicant has sought assistance to obtain alternative accommodation but this assistance has not been successful.

2.16.4.2 Inappropriate housing

This criterion includes:

- severe overcrowding

- unsuitable housing

- family reunification.

Applications are accepted under the *Inappropriate housing* criterion from new applicants and current AHV tenants.

Severe overcrowding

To meet this criterion, households must require two or more additional bedrooms for the applicant's household size, compared to their current housing.

Check that the application includes the following documentation:

- evidence that all household members have resided together for at least six months; or

- number of dependants has increased; or
- the household includes a new member who is in need of full time live-in care or a new member is providing full time live-in care to an existing household member.

'Care' in these circumstances is defined as respite care or providing regular assistance with everyday personal tasks, including help with mobility, bathing or dressing, food preparation, and monitoring and administering medication.

Evidence may include:

- confirmation from a support worker that all household members have resided together for at least six months;
- a copy of the tenancy agreement, where all household members are included on the document;
- confirmation of current address on personal documents for all household members.

If after receiving documentation, evidence is not conclusive to confirm that severe overcrowding exists, arrange for a HO to conduct a home visit.

An inspection report from a HO confirming the number of bedrooms in the property is sufficient evidence to confirm whether the household requires two or more extra bedrooms to their existing housing.

Confirm severe overcrowding by referral to the AHV *Priority housing size guidelines* on the basis that:

- two siblings of the same gender, regardless of age, share one room;
- two children of any gender, both under six years of age, share one room.

Refer to Appendix 2 for details on *Housing size guidelines* for priority housing.

Unsuitable housing

To assess an application for unsuitable housing, confirm that the household is living in at least one of the following circumstances:

- inappropriate sharing of bedrooms by parents or other adults with children; and/or
- inappropriate sharing of bedrooms by children of different genders where at least one child is six years or more; and/or
- families with dependants who do not have independent cooking/bathroom facilities, eg, living in a rooming house, hotel room or caravan.

Check that the application includes the following documentation:

- evidence that all household members have resided together for at least six months; or

- number of dependants has increased; or
- the household includes a new member who is in need of ongoing care or a new member is providing ongoing care to an existing household member; or
- the household is living in housing without independent cooking/bathroom facilities; and
- confirmation from a relevant community agency, Aboriginal Tenants at Risk (ATAR) worker or health/care professional confirming that the living conditions or environment of the housing is having a detrimental effect on the household, and assistance to obtain alternative housing has not been successful (as per *Overcrowding* above) .

Family reunification

If priority housing assistance is sought because the household's current housing is preventing the reunification of parents with their dependants, check that relevant supporting documentation is provided with the application:

If children are in state/community care, documentation must state that:

- the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection services, or relevant community service (Aboriginal controlled or mainstream) confirms that the household requires stable, affordable housing before dependants can be reunited with their family; and
- the applicant's dependants are not living with them for the sole reason that they do not have appropriate housing in which to live; and
- there is no known impediment to the children returning to the family home within six months of the allocation of AHV housing.

If children are residing with friends/relatives, a letter from a community support worker and/or statutory declarations from the applicant and the person with whom the children are residing are required.

Check that the documentation includes:

- the current housing circumstances of all members of the household; and
- the date when it is expected that the household will live together on a permanent basis, i.e. family is only separated because the applicant cannot obtain suitable housing.

Documentation is also required from Centrelink confirming that the applicant is receiving child-related payments.

If the Centrelink payments are received by another person, a statutory declaration from the carer is required confirming that:

- the arrangement is voluntary, and
- the children will reside with the applicant when appropriate housing is secured.

If applicants seeking priority housing under this criterion do not have a support worker, advise them to seek assistance from an ATAR worker or equivalent service provider, as eligibility cannot be demonstrated without supporting documentation from a relevant support worker.

2.16.4.3 Unsafe housing

Family violence

Applicants (including existing AHV tenants) are assessed for Priority Housing according to this criterion if they are or have been subjected to family violence and are living in:

- a refuge or emergency housing; or
- a THM property; or
- housing where the violence occurred; or
- temporarily with family or friends.

As for all applicants and their personal information, confidentiality must be strictly observed at all times.

Priority transfers – family violence

Retain the existing priority transfer status of an AHV tenant, if the tenant:

- has been approved for a priority transfer on the basis of family violence or serious threat of physical danger and:
- is forced to vacate their AHV property due to the serious threat of family or physical violence; and
- is residing in some form of emergency/temporary housing as a result; and
- provides confirmation from the Police or relevant community agency, that the household was required to leave the AHV property for serious health/safety reasons;

In these circumstances, advise the tenant that:

- it is their choice whether they wish to terminate the tenancy or not;
- any decision to terminate the tenancy will not affect the status of their priority application.

Eligibility criteria – family violence

To assess a priority housing application under the Family Violence criteria, check that the following documentation has been submitted by the applicant:

- an Intervention Order or an Interim Intervention Order (State), or an application for an Intervention Order or an Interim Intervention Order (State); or

- a Family Court Restraining Order (Federal); or
- a letter from a solicitor stating that criminal proceedings have commenced against the alleged perpetrator; or
- if the applicant is unable to commence legal proceedings because it would place them at further risk, a letter from a medical practitioner, solicitor or a community support worker who provides support services to persons experiencing family violence, is required to confirm that:
    - the applicant is experiencing emotional, sexual or physical violence,
    - the reason they are unable to take legal action, and
    - details of their current housing circumstances.
- Documentation from a support worker, the Police or the applicant's solicitor detailing the location(s) where the applicant cannot reside if they are to avoid further threats of violence;
- Confirmation from Centrelink re payments. If independent Centrelink payments have not commenced because the applicant is still in the process of separating from their partner, a statement from Centrelink is required advising of the type of income the applicant is eligible to receive, and the proposed commencement date of payment;
- If the applicant/household member owns or has equity in a property, a letter from a community support worker who is providing support to the applicant/household, confirming they have equity in real estate but this asset cannot currently be realised or safely utilised. In these circumstances, advise the applicant that their household's eligibility will be reassessed in AHV housing every six months to determine whether they:
    - can occupy or sell their equity in their own property, or
    - continue to meet AHV's general asset limits if the property has been subsequently sold, and
    - if they do not meet AHV's general asset limits in the future or choose not to sell their equity in the property when there is no impediment for them to do so, they may be required to vacate the AHV property and may be issued with a 120-day Notice to Vacate.

Serious threat of physical danger

This criterion applies in circumstances where households (including existing AHV tenancies) need to move to alternative housing for reasons of personal safety.

Information required to support an application

A written report from a member of Victoria Police or Federal Police is generally required to demonstrate urgent housing need according to this criterion. The report must include:

- details of police involvement in the matter; and

- confirmation that the household or a member of the household is under serious threat of physical danger.

Verbal advice from a member of the Victoria Police or Federal Police is acceptable. Make a file note of the conversation with the officer, including name, rank and location and contact number and record the reasons why it was not possible to provide a written report.

If the applicant believes that the involvement of the Police may place their household under further threat of physical danger, a report is required from a support worker such as a government/ community Family Support Worker, a social worker from a Community Health Centre, a THM or women's refuge worker, ATAR worker, Koori or Migrant Resource Centre or similar service.

The report must outline:

- the circumstances that have placed the household under serious threat of physical danger, and

- reasons why the Police cannot resolve the problem.

If the applicant cannot reside in a particular location, documentation must be provided by a support worker, the Police or the applicant's solicitor confirming the location where the applicant cannot reside.

Priority transfers – serious threat of danger

Existing AHV tenants meet this criterion if:

- they are to be a witness for AHV at VCAT either voluntarily or by subpoena and their safety may be endangered as a result; and/or

- the offending neighbour's behaviour is such that they may intimidate, threaten or assault any tenants and their visitors who assist AHV.

In circumstances where a tenant or a member of their household will be a witness for AHV at VCAT:

- request a report from the relevant HO detailing the tenant's involvement in the case, and confirming that the offending neighbour's behaviour poses a serious threat to the health/safety of the household.

2.16.4.4 Urgent medical need

This criterion is applicable to applicants or household members with a serious medical condition (including existing AHV tenants) and urgently requiring alternative housing as a result of their condition.

Applicants with a physical or intellectual disability, or a psychiatric condition, must demonstrate that their current housing is detrimental to, or exacerbates their condition.

In assessing eligibility on the basis of urgent medical need, applicants must demonstrate that they meet at least one of the following circumstances:

- serious mobility problems necessitating housing without stairs;

- impairment requiring property modifications that cannot be made to existing housing;
- medical condition requiring access to specialist medical/care services that are not accessible in their current location;
- applicant requires full time live-in care and existing housing does not provide space for a carer; and/or
- current housing is of a type or in a condition which cannot be remedied and has a demonstrably detrimental effect on the applicant's health.

Advise applicants seeking AHV assistance under this criterion, who do not have a support worker to:

- seek assistance from a relevant health worker in an Aboriginal or mainstream community health service.

Supporting documentation – urgent medical need

Documentation is required to support the application for priority housing on the basis of urgent medical need from:

- a medical practitioner, hospital or medical social worker if the condition is of a medical nature;
- a psychiatrist, psychiatric support worker or general practitioner for mental health conditions; and/or
- an occupational therapist, or disability support worker if the condition relates to a physical disability that requires special housing modifications or property features.

Where a general practitioner is providing ongoing management of one or more of these issues, documentation from the general practitioner is acceptable. However, if specific disability modifications are required, technical details must be provided by an Occupational Therapist.

The documentation must:

- describe the impact of the applicant's current housing on their condition;
- confirm that non-structural disability modifications or aids cannot be installed in their existing housing;
- outline how current housing adversely impacts on the condition or disability,
- identify whether there are any special requirements to meet the applicant's housing needs, for example, no stairs due to limited mobility,
- outline if and why extra bedrooms are required, that is:

- household members who would normally be expected to share a bedroom cannot do so because of a serious medical condition and that there is a need for a separate bedroom; or

- an additional bedroom for live-in carer is required.

If after receiving documentation, eligibility is not conclusive, arrange for a HO to conduct a home visit to confirm that the applicant's specific housing needs (as confirmed by the relevant health professional) are not met in their existing accommodation.

2.16.4.5 Supported housing

The Supported Housing criterion potentially applies to new and transfer applicants living in unsuitable housing who either:

- receive significant personal support through one of the nominated programs delivered through the DHHS disability, children, youth and family services, or mental health and aged care divisions; or

- require housing with major or full disability modifications.

Check that relevant support documentation has been provided to:

- explain why the household's current housing is unsuitable, and

- why alternative accommodation to AHV housing is not a viable option for them, including efforts made by applicant/support worker to secure alternative accommodation, or why private rental is not a viable option, ie:

  - the applicant's particular housing requirements, such as the need for a large property e.g. four or more bedrooms,

  - their capacity to search for alternative housing is limited, due to a physical, psychiatric or intellectual disability, and/or

  - the applicant's previous private rental history, including listings on tenant databases.

Disability modifications to properties

Supporting documentation from an occupational therapist or relevant medical practitioner is required to confirm:

- that the household is currently living in highly unsuitable housing;

- it is not possible and/or practical to modify the current premises;

- the specific details of required property modifications;

- that any required support to assist the applicant to live independently will be provided on an ongoing; or

- clear advice following case closure on how their service provide active assistance in the event that the client requires further support intervention to maintain their tenancy.

Applicants seeking priority housing under the Supported Housing segment who have 'major' or 'full' modification requirements may be offered properties before other Priority Housing category applicants, where vacant properties available for allocation have been modified, or are suitable for major or full modifications (see *Definitions* in the policy section of this chapter for details of 'major' and 'full' modifications).

2.16.5 Ineligible Applicants

Applicants who have been assessed as ineligible for any of the above Priority Housing categories are unable to reapply on the same grounds unless they can:

- provide additional documentation to support their application; and/or
- demonstrate that their circumstances have changed since the original application was made.

Advise applicants in writing within 7 days of the decision that:

- their application for priority housing has not been approved (and reasons for non-approval);
- the application has been included on the general waiting list (if assessed as eligible for inclusion on the general waiting list); and
- enclose information about AHV's Complaints and appeals process (see Appendix 6 *Complaints and appeals* brochure).

2.16.6 Priority housing effective date

The effective date of the priority housing status of the application is the date the application is approved.

2.17 Offers of housing

Refer to the policy and procedures described in Chapter 3 *Offers of housing and creation of tenancies* in this manual.

2.18 Matching applications to waiting lists

Once an application is assessed as eligible, approve the application and include it on the applicant's preferred waiting list area that matches the household's size. Applicants may choose a maximum of three areas.

Use the AHV *Housing size guidelines* to determine the appropriate property size for the household (see Appendix 3). Update SDM:

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If the applicant selects an area where AHV does not have any properties that match the household's eligible accommodation scheme and bedroom size, contact the primary applicant:

- and confirm that AHV does not have properties available in their nominated area(s) of preference; and
- discuss alternative areas with the applicant.

Make a file note of the conversation with the applicant and approve the application to the agreed alternative waiting list on SDM.

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2.18.1 Applicant is willing to accept smaller accommodation

The applicant may indicate that the household is prepared to accept smaller accommodation, eg, there is a smaller waiting time for 3 bedroom accommodation even though the family is eligible for 4 bedrooms. In these circumstances, advise the applicant that:

- the application may be approved to the waiting list for smaller accommodation;
- the household will not be eligible for a future priority transfer on the grounds of unsuitable housing or severe overcrowding;
- the household may make a future application for a general housing transfer to a larger property.

2.18.2 Appropriately sized stock is not available

In instances where appropriately-sized stock is not available, applications may be approved to waiting lists for housing larger than the size identified through the AHV *Housing size guidelines*.

Prepare a report for the Team Leader Client Services' approval, including the following details:

- the household's need for housing within the specific locality;
- whether appropriately sized housing is available in neighbouring areas;
- why alternative areas are inappropriate;
- the demand for the housing, i.e. the number of applications on the waiting list;
- the applicant's willingness to accept larger accommodation; and
- any other relevant information to assist the Team Leader Client Services to make a decision.

Submit the report for the Team Leader Client Services' approval. If approved:

- write to the applicant confirming the waiting list (location and property size) for which their application has been approved; and

- update waiting list approval details on SDM. Refer to SDM User Manual at:

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If not approved:

- contact the applicant to advise that their request to be considered for properties in their nominated area(s) of preference has not been approved;

- discuss alternative areas with the applicant; and

- enclose information about AHV's Complaints and appeals process (see Appendix 6 *Complaints and appeals* brochure).

Make a file note of the conversation with the applicant and approve the application to an alternative waiting list on SDM, if agreement has been reached with the applicant on an alternative waiting list.

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2.18.3 Applicant requests additional bedroom(s) for medical, disability, family reasons

If applicants are requesting additional bedrooms, check that the following supporting documentation is provided:

- A statement from a medical practitioner confirming the need for a separate bedroom due to a serious medical condition. The medical practitioner must confirm that an extra bedroom is essential to the client's ongoing health; or

- A statement from a medical practitioner confirming that the applicant is pregnant and the likely date of birth. The statement must also include the expected child's gender if an extra bedroom is being sought by the applicant on the basis that children of different genders are not required to share a bedroom.

- Confirmation from a solicitor, the Family Law Court, a statutory declaration from the primary care-giver, or a Centrelink income statement documenting the shared care (access) payments and percentages which confirms the non-custodial parent (applicant or household member) has regular child access of a minimum of 21 percent of the year or every second weekend plus half of the school and public holidays. Refer to the Housing size guidelines for priority housing (Appendix 2) when calculating appropriate size housing in these circumstances.

- If regular child access is less than 21 percent of the year, a copy of the Family Court order for the non-custodial parent (applicant or household member) is required to confirm child access arrangements are dependent on having appropriately-sized housing.

- A statement from the relevant foster care agency confirming that the foster carer (applicant or household member) is, on average, caring for foster children for at least 21% of the year. The percentage may be based on time spent fostering over the previous 12 months or an estimation of future time.

- A statement from a medical practitioner that the applicant or household member requires a live-in carer due to a serious medical condition and/or disability.

In the case of additional bedrooms for households including non-custodial parents or foster parents, refer to the *Housing size guidelines for priority housing* (see Appendix 2) when calculating appropriate size housing.

Where a live-in carer has household members or dependants who plan to live with them permanently and the members are eligible for AHV housing, identify the appropriate number of bedrooms according to the *AHV Housing size guidelines* (see Appendix 3).

2.18.4 Applicant requests exclusion from specific property types due to lack of access

If the applicant is requesting specific property types on the basis of serious medical conditions and/or disability that limit their access/mobility:

- check that medical documentation clearly identifies any access/mobility limitations and clarify access limitations where necessary;

- identify which of the access-sub-type categories below are most appropriate to the household; and

- include as many property types as possible that may be suitable for the applicant, to minimise the waiting period that the household may experience. For example, an applicant who can manage some entrance stairs and the occasional flight of stairs may be included in the 'Lift Access' category. However, when the applicant is offered a property they will be offered the first property available that meets the requirements of 'ground floor', '1-4 external stairs, no lift' or 'lift access', as all of these properties will potentially meet the applicant's requirements.

Property Access Categories

Access sub-type	Client requirements	Suitable properties
Ground floor	The client cannot manage any stairs at all.	Ground floor house, unit or walk-up property with: • no external or internal stairs (front or rear) • ramp • scope for major or full modifications.

1-4 external stairs, no lift	The client can manage up to 4 entrance stairs, but not an entire flight of stairs	• Properties with up to 4 entrance stairs. • No internal or external stairs. • Excludes high-rise properties. • 'ground floor' properties would also be suitable for this client.
Lift access	The client can manage 1 – 4 entrance stairs, and is also capable of negotiating an entire flight of stairs in exceptional circumstances	• Properties with lift access. • 'ground floor' and '1-4 external stairs, no lift' properties would also be suitable for this client.
Up to one external flight of stairs	The client can manage up to one flight of external stairs, but no internal stairs.	Property types include: • first floor walk-up flats, with no internal stairs • houses or units with 5 or more entrance stairs, and no internal stairs 'ground floor', '1-4 external stairs, no lift' and 'lift access' properties would also be suitable for this client.

2.18.5 Applicant requests special property construction requirements

Applicants with a serious and ongoing medical condition and/or disability may request a property type with a specific amenity such as:

- an enclosed yard; or
- a private driveway or parking bay for mobility reasons.

Alternatively, exemptions may be sought from housing with specific property features, such as:

- a specific construction type;
- specific furnishings eg, no carpet; and/or
- housing density.

If the applicant is requesting specific property construction/amenity requirements, check that supporting documentation:

- has been supplied from an appropriate health care professional who is treating the condition and/or providing disability support to the applicant/household member eg, general practitioner, occupational therapist, disability support worker, or psychiatrist/ psychologist depending on the condition/disability; and
- provides details of the specific property requirements as they relate to the person's serious medical condition and/or disability; and

- confirms:
    - that the condition is serious and ongoing;
    - the types of accommodation that are inappropriate; and
    - that housing in the stated inappropriate housing type would have a serious detrimental effect on the client's health and/or capacity to reside in the property.

In circumstances where applicants are seeking housing density exemptions, check that the supporting documentation provides sufficient detail to identify the appropriate density category as indicated in the table below:

Living Density Categories

Density level	Type of Properties
Low–density, detached	Single dwelling, not attached to another property in any way, e.g. house with no party walls and a yard (front and/or rear).
Low-density, attached	One of two or more dwellings that are physically joined to other units by a common wall or roof. The dwellings are not 'stacked' but each dwelling may be either single or multilevel, e.g. a row of 'townhouses'. Dwellings may have a private yard (front or rear).
Medium-density	A dwelling in a multi-unit development of between two and five storeys. Dwellings are 'stacked', i.e. one fully or partially above another, e.g. walk-up units. If the dwelling is at ground level, it may have a private yard (front or rear), but this is not standard.
High-density	A dwelling in a multi-unit development of five or more storeys, generally (although not always) serviced by a lift. An under-croft or carpark at ground floor level is counted as a 'storey' for this definition. Generally, high-density dwellings do not have private yards.

2.18.6 Applicant requests disability modified housing

If an applicant requires a property with disability modifications, check:

- that documentation has been supplied from an Occupational Therapist or other medical/ health practitioner who is responsible for the treatment or ongoing management of the applicant/household member's condition.

Use the information provided by the Occupational Therapist or other medical/health practitioner to:

- determine the type of modified accommodation most appropriate to the applicant's needs, that is minor, major or full modifications (Refer to *Definitions* section for details); and
- advise the Asset Team Leader that suitable future vacancies in the applicant's preferred locations may need to be identified under the capital works program, if major or full

modifications are required, and there are few if any suitably modified properties available in the identified locations.

2.19 Changes to household circumstances

If the applicant informs AHV of a change of contact details for their application (address or phone number):

- make a file note of the conversation; and
- change contact details on the application; and
- Update SDM. Refer to SDM User Manual at:

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In the case of any other changes (eg household composition, change of location preference), advise the primary applicant that:

- written confirm of changes is required; and
- where relevant, supporting documentation must be supplied, eg birth certificate for additional child, or income documentation for a new household member.

Ask the applicant to complete a *Housing Application Update* form (see Appendix 5).

When documentation has been received, update SDM. Refer to SDM User Manual at:

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2.19.1 Adding or removing dependants

If the applicant is adding/removing a dependant to/from the application, request:

- written details of the dependant's name and date of birth, including confirmation of identity. A dependant may be on more than one application (eg, in the case of an application for non-custodial parent with regular child access).

Ask the applicant to complete a *Housing Application Update* form (see Appendix 5).

When documentation has been received, update SDM. Refer to SDM User Manual at:

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2.19.2 Adding a non-dependant household member

If the applicant wants to add one or more non-dependants to their application, advise the applicant that:

- all necessary documentation to confirm the new household member(s)' eligibility for AHV housing (including identification and income details), must be provided before the non-dependant(s) can be included on the application.

Ask the applicant to complete a *Housing Application Update* form (see Appendix 5).

When documentation has been received, update SDM. Refer to SDM User Manual at:

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2.19.3 Removing non-dependant household members

If the applicant requests the removal of one or more non-dependants from the application, advise the applicant that:

- details of who is to be removed from the application must be provided in writing.

Ask the applicant to complete a *Housing Application Update* form (see Appendix 5).

Make contact in writing or by phone with relevant non-dependant household members to advise that:

- they have the option to submit their own application with AHV, and potentially retain the effective date of the original application that included them as household members (See *Calculating the effective date of a "split" application* below for further details).

If a non-dependent household member requests her/his removal from the application:

Write to the primary applicant:

- confirming that the request has been received form the non-dependant household member; and
- requesting the primary applicant complete and return a *Housing Application Update* form (see Appendix 5).

When written confirmation/supporting documentation has been received, and changes to household composition are confirmed:

- reassign the application to the waiting list that matches the current household size and/or location preferences, including updating SDM. Refer to SDM User Manual at:

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- write to the applicant(s) confirming the changes made.

2.20 Calculating the effective date of a 'split' application

An application may be 'split' where either of the following occurs:

- a primary applicant requests that AHV remove a household member from their application and the removed member completes a new application for housing;
- a household member (not the primary applicant):
    - requests that their name be removed from an existing housing application and makes their own separate application for housing; or
    - submits a new housing application, unaware that they were included on an existing application.

Where a new housing application is lodged by an applicant who was a former household member on another housing application:

- check supporting documentation and if it confirms that the former household member was eligible for housing at the time of joining the original application, backdate the effective date of the new application to the date the member joined the original application; or
- if the former household member was not eligible at the time s/he was included on the existing application but can provide evidence to confirm eligibility at a later date, back date the effective date of the new application to the date when eligibility for housing can be established; or
- if the former household member cannot provide evidence of eligibility during the period s/he was included on the original application but can provide evidence to confirm current eligibility, the new application cannot be backdated. The effective date is the date of lodgement of the new application.

2.21 Removing applications

Remove an application from the waiting list if:

- it has not been possible to contact the applicant, eg no longer at address; or
- updated information from the applicant confirms that the household no longer meets the eligibility criteria; or
- the applicant requests in writing that their application be temporarily removed from the waiting list, e.g. they are unable to accept an offer of housing at the present time.

Write to the applicant:

- to confirm that their application has been removed from the waiting list, providing reasons for the decision to remove it;

- to advise that the application can be revived within two years and retain its original effective date, if eligibility can be established; and
- enclose information about AHV's *Complaints and appeals* process (see Appendix 6 *Complaints and appeals* brochure).

Update hard copy file and SDM. Refer to SDM User Manual at:

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2.22 Reinstating applications

If an applicant makes contact within two years from the date their application was removed from the waiting list, advise the applicant that:

- current supporting documentation must be provided to confirm that the household is eligible for AHV housing.

Re-assess eligibility when documentation is received, and:

- reinstate the application to the waiting list with its original effective date, if the documentary evidence confirms the household meets current eligibility criteria. Refer to Refer to SDM User Manual at:

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If the household is ineligible, write to the applicant to advise:

- that the original application can be reinstated up to 2 years after the application was removed from the waiting list;
- if eligibility cannot be established within that time, the application will be rejected and it will be necessary to reapply; and
- enclose information about AHV's *Complaints and appeals* process (see Appendix 6 *Complaints and appeals* brochure).

2.23 Rejecting applications

Reject an application from the waiting list if:

- the applicant has refused all valid offers of housing; or
- the application is a duplicate that has a later effective date than the applicant's original application; or
- a sole applicant is deceased; or
- the application was removed from the waiting list more than two years earlier.

- Update SDM. Refer to Refer to SDM User Manual at:

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Advise the applicant that:

- their application has been rejected, providing reasons for the decision to reject; and
- enclose information about AHV's *Complaints and appeals* process (see Appendix 6 *Complaints and appeals* brochure).

2.24 Reviewing the waiting list

Maintain the accuracy and currency of the waiting list by maintaining regular contact with applicants to confirm their household's continued eligibility for housing.

Send *Housing application update* form (see Appendix 5) to applicants seeking confirmation of:

- household composition;
- eligibility of household members; and
- current address and telephone numbers.

Advise applicants that:

- they have 28 days to complete and return the completed form; and
- failure to return the completed form may lead to the removal of their application from the waiting list.

Check that returned *Housing application update* forms:

- have been completed, including signing of the declaration; and
- that any required supporting documentation is attached.

If the form is complete and documentation confirms ongoing eligibility:

- update any new details on the hard and electronic files. Refer to SDM User Manual at:

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- include the completed form on the hard copy file.

If the form is incomplete, write to the applicant:

- confirming the outstanding information required; and

- advising that the applicant must respond within 28 days or risk removal of their application from the waiting list.

If the applicant does not respond to the request or subsequent letters within the specified time:

- remove their application from the waiting list. Refer to SDM User Manual at:

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- write to the applicant advising that their application has been removed from the waiting list, and the reasons for removal;

- enclose information about AHV's *Complaints and appeals* process (see Appendix 6 *Complaints and appeals* brochure).

Revive the application if the applicant:

- makes contact within two years; and

- provides necessary documentation to confirm their household composition, eligibility and preferences.

- If revived, re-instate the original effective date of the application.

- Update SDM records. Refer to SDM User Manual at:

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Appendices

Appendix 1

List of Assessable/non-assessable income for AHV eligibility purposes

Assessable income

- Age pension
- Australian service pension
- Centrelink working credits scheme – wages component
- Centrelink pensions, benefits and partners allowance
- Community development employment project (CDEP) income
- Defence force income supplement allowance (DFIS) – paid to clients whose main Centrelink income has been reduced because they receive a Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) War Disability pension. DVA pays DFIS to these clients to make up the shortfall
- Defence force reserve payments
- Disability support pension
- Disability wage supplement
- Gross wages, including overtime, shift allowances and bonuses, before tax instalments, recreation leave loading, any one off or abnormal payments, site, dirt, height and risk allowances. Superannuation contributions and union fees are deducted
- Gross income received by ministers of religion
- Incentive allowance
- Income from investments and interest on savings (the deemed interest rate is used in this situation, regardless of what interest is actually received) including interest received from one-off prisoner of war payments, F-111 ex-gratia lump sum payments and the pension bonus.
- Income support supplement, paid by the Department of Veterans' Affairs
- Living away from home allowance
- Maintenance payments (includes in-kind payments unless recipient can show that these are discretional, i.e. not in lieu of a cash payment)
- Mature age allowance

- Net profits (for self-employed tenants and residents)
- New enterprise incentive scheme
- Orphan pension (if recipient is 18 years or over)
- Overseas income including overseas war service or veterans pension
- Payments in kind (ie where goods or services are received in lieu of wages)
- Relocation scholarship for Youth allowance and Abstudy (living allowance) students
- 'Sacrificed incomes' incomes
- Sheltered workshop payments
- Special benefits
- Superannuation payments
- Veterans Affairs pensions including war widows pension and additional payments for dependant children
- War disability pension up to the level of a Centrelink benefit or pension where the applicant's other income is less than a maximum Centrelink entitlement
- Winnings
- Work Cover and other compensation payments
- University grants and bursaries
- Youth allowance (if recipient is 18 years and over)

Appendix 1

Non-assessable income

Income not included when assessing applicants' income are:

- Austudy loan
- Austudy pensioner education supplement
- Baby bonus – originally called 'maternity payment.' This was first paid in 2004 as a one-off $3,000 per child lump sum paid to families for children born or adopted after 1 July 2004. The lump sum payment amount is indexed in line with the Consumer Price Index each July.
- Bereavement payment
- Book allowance
- Carer's allowance
- Centrelink working credits scheme – Centrelink component
- Child care benefit
- Community jobs program income. Where an applicant is in receipt of a Community jobs program income the relevant Centrelink income is imputed.
- Double orphan allowance
- Education allowances paid by the State Government for administration fees, fares and child care assistance for students (administration charge allowance, fares allowance, child care allowance)
- Education entry payment
- F-111 ex-gratia one-off lump sum payment
- Family tax benefit part A
- Family tax benefit part B
- Fares assistance
- Formal training allowance (paid with Centrelink pension or benefit)
- Foster allowance
- GST component of Centrelink payments

- Income of dependants under 18 years of age
- Income of children, aged 18 – 24 of transfer applicants
- Maternity payment – see baby bonus
- Mobility allowance
- Multiple birth allowance
- Non-realisable assets e.g. superannuation rollover funds
- Older Australian's bonus – a one-off $500 bonus payment as part of the 2007/2008 Federal budget that was paid to older Australian's of Age pension age. It was paid to recipients of the age pension, mature age allowance, widow allowance, partner allowance, Commonwealth seniors card and Veteran's Affairs gold card holders.
- Orphan pension (if recipient is under 18 years of age)
- Pension bonus scheme – a one-off lump sum paid to people who continue working and defer claiming the age pension
- Pharmaceutical allowance
- Remedial tuition allowance
- Rent assistance
- School start bonus – one-off payment paid to families with children starting prep and year seven at a government or non-government school
- Telephone rental concession
- Travel, meals and accommodation allowances
- War disability pension, where the applicant's other income is more than a maximum Centrelink benefit or pension entitlement
- Youth allowance (if recipient is 16 or 17) and recipient will be a resident
- Youth disability allowance

Appendix 2

Housing Size Guidelines for Priority Housing Assessment

Household Groupings		Minimum no. of rooms per group
Single person or couple		1 bedroom
Resident 18 years and over		1 bedroom
1 child younger than 18 years of age		1 bedroom
2 children under 18 years of age	2 children of same gender 1 child of each gender	1 bedroom 2 bedrooms
3 children under 18 years of age	same gender 2 children of one gender and 1 of the other gender	2 bedrooms 2 bedrooms
4 children under 18 years of age	same gender 2 children of each gender 3 children of same gender and 1 of the other gender	2 bedrooms 2 bedrooms 3 bedrooms
5 children under 18 years of age	any combination	3 bedrooms
6 children or more under 18 years of age	6 children of the same gender 4 children of one gender and 2 of the other gender any other combination	3 bedrooms 3 bedrooms 4 bedrooms

To calculate the total number of bedrooms for each household, add the number of bedrooms that correspond with the number of groupings within the household. See examples below.

Appendix 2

Example 1

A couple with four children (daughters aged 12, 8, 6 and 4) currently living in a two-bedroom property would not be eligible under severe overcrowding or unsuitable housing. The household is not eligible under unsuitable housing because the daughters are not forced to share a bedroom with their parents. They are not eligible under severe overcrowding because they have a need for one extra bedroom according to the table above.

Example 2

A couple with two children (a daughter aged 8 and a son aged 4) currently living in a two-bedroom property would be eligible under unsuitable housing. The household is eligible under unsuitable housing because the son is forced to share a bedroom with either his sister aged 6 or over or to share with his parents.

Example 3

A sole parent with seven children (daughters aged 17, 9, five and two and sons aged 15, 12 and three) currently living in a three-bedroom property would be eligible under severe overcrowding. The household is eligible because according to the table above they have a need for a five bedroom property.

Example 4

A couple with four children (daughters aged 14 and 13 and sons aged 11 and nine) with two cousins (female aged 18 and male aged 20) currently living in a three-bedroom property would be eligible under severe overcrowding according to the table above they have a need for a five bedroom property.

Example 5

A couple with two children (a daughter aged four and a son aged two) currently living in a two bedroom private rental property would not have grounds under severe overcrowding or unsuitable housing as both children are under six years and they are not forced to share a bedroom with their parents. If the household has grounds under urgent medical need, the priority housing asset limit would be $1,300 (i.e. one and two bedroom), but the household would be approved to a three bedroom waiting list.

Appendix 3

AHV Housing size guidelines

Household Groupings		Minimum no. of rooms per group
Single person or couple		1 bedroom
Resident 18 years and over		1 bedroom
1 child younger than 18 years of age		1 bedroom
2 children under 18 years of age	2 children of same gender 1 child of each gender 2 children of same gender but five years or more differential in age	1 bedroom 2 bedrooms 2 bedrooms
3 children under 18 years of age	3 children of same gender 2 children of one gender and one of the other gender 3 children of same gender but five years or more differential in age	2 bedrooms 2 bedrooms 3 bedrooms
4 children under 18 years of age	same gender 2 children of each gender 3 children of same gender and one of the other gender 4 children of same gender but five years or more differential in age	2 bedrooms 2 bedrooms 3 bedrooms 4 bedrooms
5 children under 18 years of age	any combination	3 bedrooms
6 children or more under 18 years of age	6 children of the same gender 4 children of same gender and two of the other gender any other combination	3 bedrooms 3 bedrooms 4 bedrooms

Aboriginal Housing Victoria

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

When submitting this application for housing, please supply the following documents for everyone on the application:

IDENTIFICATION
Provide Copies of any two of the following: passport, drivers licence, birth Certificate, health care card, Medicare card etc. for all household members.

CONFIRMATION OF ABORIGINALITY
Provide Confirmation of Aboriginality form for at least one permanent household member.

INCOME
Provide Centrelink statement no older than 4 weeks or a 13-week wage statement for all household members 18 years of age and older.

ASSET – BANK BOOK OR BANK STATEMENT
Statements must include the last 6 transactions and be no more than 4 weeks old for all household members 18 years of age and older.

CHILD EXPECTANCY CONFIRMATION
If a household member is pregnant provide medical confirmation of expectancy such as a medical certificate noting when the baby is due and sex of child if known.

MEDICAL SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION
If a household member requires property modifications or exemptions due to a medical condition provide a letter from a medical practitioner detailing the specific property needs.

You can lodge this application either to:

Aboriginal Housing Victoria
Narrandjeri House, 125 – 127 Scotchmer Street, North Fitzroy, Vic, 3068

OR provide it to your local AHV Housing Officer

Aboriginal Housing Victoria

HOUSING APPLICATION UPDATE FORM

Are you still interested in being housed with Aboriginal Housing Victoria? Yes / No

Surname:	Given Name(s):
Application No:	Date of Birth:
Residential Address:	
Postal Address:	
Contact Numbers:	Home: Work: Mobile:

UPDATE PREFERRED AREAS

Preferred Location (If you require housing in a particular area, or you need specific type of accommodation, please ask your Housing Officer for a Medical Assessment Form)

1.
2.
3.

PLEASE ADD / REMOVE THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE FROM MY APPLICATION

Name	Sex F/M	Date of Birth	Country of Birth	Relationship to Applicant	Add or Remove
		/ /			
		/ /			
		/ /			
		/ /			
		/ /			

You will need to provide two forms of identification, proof of custody, income and bank confirmation for any persons being added to this application.

Signature:	Date:

Office Use Only

Received Date:	Application Updated: Yes / No	Updated By:

ABORIGINAL HOUSING VICTORIA

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCESS

WHAT IS THE COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS SYSTEM?

Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) is committed to providing good quality housing and housing services for Indigenous people in Victoria.

Our Complaints and Appeals system ensures tenants and applicants can voice their concerns and have them addressed and resolved. By listening to these concerns AHV can improve on how we provide our housing services.

AHV'S Complaints and Appeals system deals with complaints from tenants, applicants or the wider community about our service. Appeals about decisions that AHV have made will also be investigated.

WHAT TO DO …….

If you are not satisfied with our service or a decision we have made…….

You can make a complaint about our housing service or appeal a decision that we have made by filling out the **complaints/appeals proforma at the end of this document.**

On the form you will need to give details of the complaint you are making or decision you are appealing, and why you are doing so. Attach any copies of documents supporting your application.

If you need help to fill out the form, you can:

- ask a relative or friend to help
- contact a community worker at your local Cooperative, or community housing group, or;
- contact AHV on 03 9403 2100 or for country callers 1300 724 882

What will happen to your complaint or appeal?
After your Complaint has been lodged, AHV will send an acknowledgement letter and your complaint/appeal will be thoroughly investigated. The investigation will include a detailed discussion about the complaint or appeal with you and the person/s involved.

You will be advised of the outcome of the investigation within 30 days of it being received. This advice will be in writing.

TYPES OF COMPLAINTS AND WHAT CAN BE APPEALED?

If you are dissatisfied with a service you have received from AHV or believe that a decision has been made incorrectly, you have the right to complain or appeal. Examples of types of complaints and decisions that can be appealed may include:

• Service from any staff or member within AHV • Revival of rental applications. • Priority housing appeals • Allocations policy decisions • Eligibility for housing, • Relocations, transfers, mutual swaps	• Rental subsidies – assessment, cancellation, backdating of a subsidy, • Requests for a property upgrade • Requests for disability modifications; or applications for sleep-outs.

Appendix 6

WHAT AHV's COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY DOES NOT DO …….

AHV Complaints and Appeals system does not resolve all matters, for example, it does not deal with tenancy legal matters or disputes and grievances. Tenancy legal matters are dealt with by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). VCAT is an independent board given powers under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* to hear and settle disputes between a landlord and a tenant. If you have a Complaint or Appeal about a matter which is covered by the *Residential Tenancies Act* you will need to get advice from a tenancy service or advocate. These matters include:

- Breach notices or Notices to Vacate for rental arrears, anti-social behaviour, etc.
- Evictions
- Legal agreements
- Requests for emergency and responsive maintenance
- Tenant responsibility maintenance compensation.

It is important to discuss these matters with your Regional Housing Officer, however, they cannot be addressed by *AHV's Complaints and Appeals System*.

CONTACTS

If you require further information on AHV's Complaints and Appeals System or would like to make a complaint, contact;

Aboriginal Housing Victoria
125-127 Scotchmer Street, Fitzroy North Vic 3068
Tel: 03 9403 2100 / Fax: 03 9403 2122
Email: info@ahvic.org.au / Website: www.ahvic.org.au

Other resources that may assist you:

Ombudsman Victoria
Level 9, 459 Collins Street (North Tower)
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Tel: 9613 6222 or Toll Free Tel: 1800 806 314
Email: ombudvic@ombudsman.vic.gov.au

Dispute Settlement Centre Victoria
4/456 Lonsdale St.
Melbourne VIC 3000
Tel: 03 9603 8370 or Toll Free Tel: 1800 658 528
Email: dscv@justice.vic.gov.au

Consumer Affairs Victoria
121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne 3000
Tel: 1300 55 81 81
Email: consumer@justice.vic.gov.au

Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria
Level 3, 380 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Tel: 1800 134 142 (Toll Free)
Email: information@veohrc.vic.gov.au

Tenants Union Victoria
55 Johnston Street
Fitzroy Vic 3065
Tel: 03 94162577
Website: www.tuv.org.au

PRIVACY INFORMATION

Aboriginal Housing Victoria is committed to protecting the privacy of your information. In order to resolve the matters raised by your appeal, relevant AHV staff may access and share the information contained in your appeal.

Furthermore, personal or health information AHV already holds about you, that is relevant to your appeal, will also be shared among AHV staff in relevant parts of the organisation (but only with those who are directly involved in the matters you have raised in your appeal). AHV will not disclose personal or health information through other avenues unless authorised by you or as authorised by law.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 1982, clients can apply for access to their information held by AHV.

APPLICATION FOR APPEAL

In this section, please indicate:
Name: _____
Address: _____
Contact Number: _____

1. What decision is being appealed? (tick box)

	your special housing needs application		your application for AHV housing
	request for special maintenance work		your rental subsidy application
	exemptions		
	other (please specify)		

2. Why do you believe the decision should be changed? It is important to provide AHV with as much information as possible to support your appeal. If there is not enough room in the space provided below, please pin or staple additional information or supporting documents to the top corner of this page.

Appellant's signature		**Date**	

CENTRELINK AUTHORISATION

Multiple Consent and Authority Aboriginal Housing Victoria

I, _____ of _____ (address)
_____ (CRN) authorise:

Customers must clearly indicate for each service they wish this Customer Consent to apply. Please circle and/or delete as appropriate.			
1	Electronic verification of rent	Aboriginal Housing Victoria: □ to provide my current and future accommodation information to Centrelink for the reassessment of my eligibility for Commonwealth Rent Assistance.	**Yes / No**
2	Centrepay	Aboriginal Housing Victoria to advise Centrelink: □ to vary my existing Centrepay deduction or target amount or suspend the nominated deduction from time to time to ensure my housing payments are met. □ of my correct account or billing number if required. Centrelink: □ to provide information for the purpose of reconciling my payment deduction details.	**Yes / No**
3	Income confirmation	Centrelink: □ to electronically provide a statement of information to Community Housing (Vic) Ltd to assist in the assessment of my entitlement of services Aboriginal Housing Victoria. Information provided by Centrelink may include, where relevant, current or historical details of payments received, dependants, Centrelink deductions, income, assets and confirmation of my current address.	**Yes / No**

I understand that this consent, once signed, is effective for the service/s indicated, and only for the period that I am a customer of Aboriginal Housing Victoria.

I also understand, that this consent which is ongoing, may be revoked by me, at any time, by giving notice in writing to Aboriginal Housing Victoria.

I understand that consent may be revoked for all indicated services or selected services and that Aboriginal Housing Victoria will maintain the consent.

I understand that if I withdraw part or all of this consent that I may not be eligible for the concessions provided by Aboriginal Housing Victoria and that I will be responsible for notifying Centrelink of all future changes to my accommodation circumstances.

I understand that every time that Aboriginal Housing Victoria provides information to Centrelink for EVoR and/ or Centrepay, I will be advised.

I understand that I will be able to obtain a written copy of the Statements at any time from either Aboriginal Housing Victoria or Centrelink.

A brochure is available from Centrelink that provides more details about the Centrelink Confirmation eServices and Centrepay or you can obtain further information about the services, including EVoR on Centrelink's website at www.centrelink.gov.au or from your housing provider.

Name: _____ D.O.B _____/_____/_____

Signed: _____ Dated: _____/_____/____