

Renter Engagement and Property Inspection Policy

REVISION NO. 1.0
ISSUED 01/01/2024

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 renters 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 Policy Objectives

This policy aims to support and provide appropriate, and secure housing to achieve housing stability and sustainable tenancies.

This policy aims to deliver fair and responsive tenancy and property management services to eligible Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) renters who require safe, secure and affordable housing of a good standard.

2 Scope

These policies apply to all long-term rental properties owned or managed by Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV).

Stakeholders may include, current and former renters, eligible housing applicants and renters, renters and where the sole renter is deceased, the legal representative or next of kin, industry bodies, government departments or organisations.

3 Supporting sustainable and positive tenancies and communities

3.1 Sustaining tenancies and building communities

AHV may adopt various strategies in response to creating and building sustainable communities and tenancies where there is:

- a high concentration of social housing stock in a particular area;
- a high concentration of renters with multiple health, social or economic issues in a particular area or development;
- existing tenancy management issues (or the potential for future issues to develop);
- existing neighbourhood tensions or disputes which may be exacerbated if allocations are not sensitively handled; and/or
- a mismatch of supply and demand that results in a property being hard to let.

Where appropriate and with consent, AHV will make referrals to support services both internal and external to engage renters with service that can assist to sustain tenancies. This can include legal services, life coaching, health and wellbeing programs, yarning circles, and local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

Attempts to liaise with current support or to engage new supports will be a consideration in any tenancy management issue, especially when these issues have escalated to the point of potential eviction.

3.2 Wellbeing Programs

AHV seeks to identify renters who may be experiencing medical, mental health social, or family issues that may adversely affect their ability to maintain their AHV tenancies. AHV recognises the importance of early intervention and facilitates the renter's linkages to relevant health and community services that may be able to support the renter to successfully manage their tenancy.

Life coaching may be provided to support renters and their families to work towards their personal goals. At any point of a tenancy, eligible renters can consent to be referred to the Wellbeing program, and a discussion is facilitated regarding existing support services that the renter may be accessing, and whether the renter requires AHV assistance to link into other relevant services.

For further information on the eligibility for the Wellbeing programs please refer to the "*AHV Wellbeing Programs Policy*".

4 Inspections and Home Visits

4.1 Inspection and Home Visit Frequency

AHV ensures that home visits and six-monthly inspections are conducted on properties to ensure we are:

- Meeting our legal duties
- Connecting with our renters in their home
- Maintaining properties to a high standard and the renters are maintaining their home to a high standard
- Identifying concerns within the home to create early interventions

Inspections or Home Visits may occur more frequently where staff need to assess whether any required corrective action has been taken, at the request of the renter or where there may be concerns relating to the tenancy and/or welfare of the household member/s.

4.2 Notice of Inspection and Home Visits

There are many different reasons that AHV staff may need to visit a home and where necessary, entry notices will be issued in accordance with Consumer Affairs Victoria requirements. AHV will contact all renters prior to the inspection as a reminder of our attendance and perform any pre-inspection process regarding the health and wellbeing of the household.

Home visits to renters may be done informally without formal notice where the renter has given consent, or the organisations believes there is welfare concerns or to support the sustaining of a tenancy.

4.3 Coordinating and Conducting Inspections and Home Visits

AHV will exercise their right to enter the home, using available keys, to complete inspections where the appropriate notice has been issued. This does not require the renters consent however where the renter has given reason not to enter, the organisation will endeavor to reschedule if possible e.g. during a period of sorry business.

An inspection or home visit may also be rescheduled where there are safety or welfare concerns, or where there is not an adult household member present. AHV will not refuse the renter the right to have their supports present in the home during the inspection time.

Actions that arise from a home visit or inspection will be addressed within 5 business days of the date of inspection.

5 Relevant Documents

5.1 Policies and procedures

Related policies, procedures
Eligibility and Allocations eligibility policy
Wellbeing Programs Policy

5.2 Legislation

Legislation, Standards, Guidelines
Charter of Human Rights Act 2006 (Victoria)
Housing Act 1983 (Victoria)
Performance standards for registered housing agencies 2015 (Victoria Housing Registrar)
Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Victoria)
Victorian Housing Register Operational Guidelines 2020 (Victoria Department of Families Fairness and Housing)

Document control

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