

Your rent in Community Housing

Fact sheet for tenants

Community housing tenants pay a rent amount based on a percentage of their gross household income plus the Commonwealth Rent Assistance to which the household is entitled, or the market rent of the property, whichever is less.

Rent amounts may vary, depending on the type of community housing program:

- Long Term Community Housing, Community Rent Scheme or Same House Different Landlord Program – you will pay 25 percent of the assessable household income plus any Commonwealth Rent Assistance you are entitled to
- Community-managed Housing – Studio Unit Program - you will pay 25 percent of the assessable household income and may be charged a 3 percent surcharge for furnishings, plus any Commonwealth Rent Assistance you are entitled to
- Affordable Housing - you will pay up to 30 percent of the gross household income plus any Commonwealth Rent Assistance you are entitled to. The Benchmark Affordable Housing Rent Guide, published by the department allows Affordable Housing Providers to charge rent based on a discount of the market rent.
- Crisis Accommodation -Rent or service fees may be charged in properties managed under the Crisis Accommodation Program. The charges will depend on the type of accommodation, how long it is provided for and the household's circumstances including their capacity to pay.

How is my rent calculated?

Your total household's assessable income is used to calculate the rent you will pay.

You will pay rent based on either 25 or 30 percent (depending on the community housing program you are housed under) of your total household's assessable income plus any Commonwealth Rent Assistance you are entitled to, or the market rent for the property in which you live—whichever is lowest.

The market rent is equal to the rent charged for a similar property in the private rental market.

Your provider is responsible for determining the market rent for your property.

You have a right to appeal the market rent for the property that you are renting. Appeals relating to market rent should be made to your community housing provider.

What types of income are used to calculate rent?

- Most pensions, benefits and allowances paid by Centrelink and the Department of Veterans' Affairs
- Family Tax Benefit
- Wages, salaries and work allowances such as overtime, bonuses, shift allowances, and penalty rates

- Income such as regular superannuation, compensation, interest from savings, maintenance and lump sum payments
- The average of your previous 4 weeks of earnings from:
 - casual earnings
 - overtime
 - bonuses
 - allowances
 - other income which varies.

What is Rent Assistance?

Rent Assistance is a special payment from the Australian Government to help eligible people pay their rent. If you are eligible, your provider will calculate the amount of rent assistance you are entitled to and will incorporate it into your rent calculation.

To apply for Rent Assistance, you must supply Centrelink with a rent statement. Public housing tenants living in a property owned and managed by the Department of Housing and Public Works are not eligible for this payment.

What if I have no income?

Rent is assessed on all household incomes. If you have no income, a very low income, or you cannot verify your income, you will be assessed as having an income based on the equivalent Centrelink payment.

The equivalent Centrelink payment is the payment that most closely aligns with your circumstances, even if you do not qualify to receive payments.

What if my income changes?

If there is a change in your household circumstances which affects your household's income or if your income regularly changes because of casual work, or other income changes, let your provider know in case your rent needs to be changed.

Providers review rent annually to take into account Centrelink rate increases and changes in work circumstances. You can also request a review at any time if your circumstances change, or if you don't agree with the rent calculation.

Where can I get more information?

Your provider will explain how your rent is calculated and discuss any concerns or questions you have.

You should raise any concerns you have about your rent with your provider.