

## Confidentiality and Privacy

Client confidentiality and privacy is central to WHL work practices

WHL services involve gathering and storing personal and often highly sensitive information. WHL will protect this information and ensure that it is handled appropriately and only used for its intended purposes.

### **What information is collected and how will it be used?**

WHL will collect the minimum personal information required to determine your eligibility into WHL services and ongoing service provision. We collect information in a variety of ways including applications for housing vacancies, assessment and referral forms, tenancy agreements, website enquiries, other various forms and through our ongoing contact with you. In some cases we may collect CCTV images (if relevant) and calls to and from our (03) 9412 6868 phone number may be recorded.

Information collected will be used to assess eligibility of the transitional and community housing programs, advocacy and referral services, allocation of HEF, ongoing tenancy management, and for the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (non identifying information).

Information collected may include:

- Names, addresses, dates of birth and contact details
- Income statements and banking details
- Number and ages of children

- Current housing status and housing history
- Cultural identity to determine interpreter requirements
- Health issues
- Personal support needs
- Domestic Violence history
- Landlord details
- Support worker details

### **Who can WHL share my personal information with?**

Confidential information will only be shared between WHL and relevant services after you have provided consent. If you choose not to consent, this choice will be respected and will not constitute a barrier to receiving WHL services. For practical reasons it may be necessary on occasions for staff to seek verbal consent to disclosure when working with a client over the phone. In these circumstances the worker will make notes to that effect on the client file.

There are certain occasions when information can be given and received without your consent. These situations are when the law requires the disclosure of information, or if there is a duty of care to disclose information, e.g. mandatory reporting, matters relating to child protection or criminal matters. Wherever possible and appropriate, you will be informed of the release of information that occurs without your consent.

Information you or your support agency provides to WHL may be disclosed to other relevant services in order to assess and plan service responses. These services may include:

- Support Agencies and Housing Services
- WHL staff
- Independent contractors
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Justice
- Police
- Child Protection
- Health Services

### **What laws protect my personal information?**

Your personal information is protected by the Information Privacy Act 2000, Privacy Act 1988 and Records Act 1973. In addition, WHL is guided by the DHS Privacy Principles, Consumer Charter for Community Managed Housing and Homelessness Services, National Community Housing Standards and DHHS One Standards.

### **Further Information**

If you do not understand or wish to access your information via Freedom of Information please speak to your relevant worker or their manager.

If you have a complaint about information being accessed or disclosed without your consent, you may contact the Victorian Privacy Commissioner, or if the information pertains to health (including disability), you may contact the Health Services Commissioner. Clients will be advised accordingly of these avenues.