

Hardship Policy

May 2019



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Owner: Lindy Parker

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to Women's Housing Ltd (WHL) tenants about the process involved in reducing rental charges due to an episode of hardship.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all WHL tenants.

3. Policy

The aim of this policy is to enable all tenants to sustain their tenancy when they are experiencing episodes of hardship.

WHL will always attempt to work with tenants who are experiencing financial hardship to make suitable flexible rental payments.

WHL will also attempt to provide referrals to alternate agencies that may be able to assist tenants with financial counselling and/or financial assistance.

4. Transitional Housing

WHL may reduce a tenant's rent if the tenant is absent from their property for a brief period due to a tenant being in:

- Prison
- Hospital
- Rehabilitation or respite care.

In these cases, the support worker will provide documentation as to when the tenant has entered the facility and the anticipated date of returning to their property. In the case of being in hospital, rehabilitation or respite care, the tenant must demonstrate that she is paying a fee for their accommodation therein.

In these cases, rent may be reduced to \$15 per week for the period of absence.

As tenants are paying an income-based rent, tenants should notify WHL immediately their income varies, so that WHL can ensure that tenants are paying the correct rental.

5. Community and Rooming Housing

WHL will review each request for a reduction of rent based on its merit.

A reduction of rent may be available to tenants when they:

- Lose their job
- A child or partner vacates the property affecting the overall income of the household
- Illness which results in a change of household income
- Death of a tenant

In order to receive this benefit, the resident will provide WHL with a statement outlining the circumstances and the period for which the rent reduction is requested. Where possible evidence to support this claim should be attached.

All rent reductions will be reviewed every three months.

6. Relevant Legislation

- The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)