

Relocations Policy



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1. Purpose

This policy advises renters about situations where they may need to be permanently relocated to another property. It outlines their rights and obligations, and the process that WHL will follow to appropriately relocate the renter.

- For situations where a renter is being transferred from one WHL property to another WHL property due to personal reasons, see WHL's Transfers Policy
- For situations where a renter needs to be temporarily provided with accommodation due to an emergency such as a fire or flood, see WHL's Emergency Accommodation Policy

2. Scope

This policy applies to all long-term properties owned or managed by WHL. This policy does not apply to Transitional Housing properties, as relocation would be managed in conjunction with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH).

This may include a single relocation or a large housing complex impacting several renters.

3. Policy statement

WHL may require renters to relocate to another property for a range of reasons, including but not limited to:

- Redevelopment or major refurbishment as required to sustain the property
- Divestment of the property (i.e., it is being sold)
- Situations where properties sustain major damage that may render the property uninhabitable or uneconomically viable to repair, such as a fire or serious flood damage
- WHL have received a Notice to Vacate for any of the above reasons from the DFFH

WHL will manage relocations by aligning to the following principles:

- Providing clear and consistent communication to renters about relocation
- Explaining housing options to renters clearly
- Matching renters to housing based on identified needs of renter
- Articulating the limitation of available options if necessary

4. Risk assessment

A risk assessment is undertaken whenever the need for a relocation is identified. The risk assessment will consider:

- The purpose for relocation
- Renter needs
- Staff availability to manage response
- Level of support DFFH and/or other agencies
- Availability of essential services and supplies
- Access to site
- Reason for relocation
- Number of renters
- Availability of suitable alternative accommodation

WHL will only proceed with a relocation when it is absolutely necessary and after consultation with the Operational Management Group.

5. Communication

WHL will attempt to arrange a face-to-face meeting with impacted renters to explain why a relocation is required. In emergency situations, this may occur over the phone.

Following this, renters will be notified in writing of relocation plans. This letter will convey:

- Basic timelines for relocation
- Reason why relocation is required
- WHL's intention regarding re-housing renters
- What assistance will be available during this process

This letter will enable renters to elect to manage their own relocation or to be supported through this process by WHL.

WHL will maintain communication with renters via letters, meetings and phone calls to ensure that they feel supported through this process.

6. Notices to Vacate (NTVs)

WHL may need to issue renters with a Notice to Vacate as part of the relocations process, such as when the property is no longer inhabitable. This is to ensure that renters' rights under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic) are upheld during the process. WHL will speak with renters about the process before issuing a NTV.

7. Assistance provided to renters

WHL will assist renters with:

- Advice about lodging a priority transfer request on the Victorian Housing Register (VHR)
- General housing advice, including information about how to apply for social housing
- Referrals to an IAP service who may be able to assist with funding for relocation costs (note – this depends on funding availability and individual eligibility)

- Identifying if there are any available and suitable properties in WHL's portfolio that the renter can transfer into

8. Renter responsibilities

Renters will be required to:

- Pack and unpack their personal belongings.
- Organise their belongings to be moved
- Receive and read any correspondence from WHL pertaining to the relocation
- Restore the property to its original condition (notwithstanding fair wear and tear)
- Disconnect utilities and any services in the renters' name

9. Victorian Housing Register

Renters must apply for the Victorian Housing Register for a priority transfer to remain eligible for public and community housing. The VHR is overseen by the DFFH and WHL cannot control if renters are no longer eligible. WHL can assist renters by contacting the VHR and providing a letter of support to confirm the situation.

10. Relevant legislation and related documents

- Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)
- Housing Act 1983
- Building Regulations 2006
- Building Act 1993
- WHL Transfer Policy
- WHL Emergency Accommodation Policy
- WHL Renter Damage Policy
- WHL Bond Management Policy
- WHL Ending Tenancies Policy
- WHL Complaints and Appeals Policy