



Rental Rebates for public housing tenants – important information from Housing ACT

What is a Rental Rebate?

A rental rebate is assistance given to tenants of public and community housing who are unable to pay the market or full rent of their property. It is the difference between market rent and the maximum rent, calculated as a percentage of assessable household income.

How are rents calculated?

The market rents for public and community housing properties are reviewed every year to ensure that they are equivalent to similar properties on the private rental market.

Who is eligible for a rebate?

Tenants of both public and community housing may be entitled to a rental rebate however the way rebates are calculated may be managed differently depending on the community housing provider. This Fact Sheet specifically relates to how rebates will be managed in **public housing**. For information on how rebates in community housing will be calculated please contact the relevant organisation directly on:

- Havelock Housing Association - (02) 6257 2277
- Billabong Aboriginal Development Corporation - (02) 6278 4799
- Environmental Collective Housing Organisation (ECHO) - (02) 6262 8275
- Capital Community Housing - (02) 6287 4344
- Tamil Senior Citizens Association - (02) 6286 1709



Rental rebates for public housing tenants

Tenants who newly enter public housing are granted a rental rebate equal to the initial rent payable. Initial rent is rent for the remainder of the week during which the tenancy is signed plus one fortnight.

If you are paying rent higher than 25% of your household's gross assessable income, you may be eligible for ongoing rental rebate assistance.

A rent rebate will not be granted where the amount of rent rebate to which the tenant would otherwise be entitled is less than \$5.00.

Minimum Rent / Maximum Rent

Minimum rent payable is \$5.00 per week.

Maximum rent payable is market rent, or the rent assessed according to income, whichever is less.

What is assessed as income?

Income includes all payments from all sources that come into your household. For example:

- most Centrelink benefits;
- pensions;
- overseas pensions;
- superannuation;
- child maintenance;
- most Veteran's Affairs benefits;
- wages (including overtime & allowances);
- bonuses & commission;
- interest or other investment returns;
- self-employment income from all sources; and
- any other income paid to you and all other household members.

How do I apply?

Forms are available from Gateway Services. You complete an Application for Rental Rebate form and attach supporting documentation to confirm your eligibility (eg. proof of income for each household member, statements of income earned over the previous 26 weeks). Lodge the complete application at Gateway Services.



Only a complete application will be accepted and processed by Housing ACT. A complete application has all the sections completed and required documentation attached. Housing ACT may at any time in writing request further information in connection with an application.

Failure to provide further information

If a tenant does not respond to requests for further information by the due date, the rental rebate is cancelled and the market rent is charged from the date of cancellation of the rental rebate.

What if there are joint tenants?

The application must be signed by all tenants party to the Tenancy Agreement. The incomes of the joint tenants are included to calculate the rebate entitlement. Individual incomes of any other household members may also be used.

How long does a rental rebate continue?

Rebates are granted for either 6 or 12 months depending on your source of income.

Towards the end of this period, Housing ACT will send you a reminder letter and an application form for continuation of the rebate. You may also be able to use the Income Confirmation Service to renew your rebate (see the 'Income Confirmation Service' Fact Sheet for more information).

If you consider that you are still eligible for the rental rebate you must fill out the form and return it and all supporting documentation promptly to Housing ACT. This will ensure continuation of your rebate.

If you do not apply by the due date the full market rent on your property will be charged.

Am I entitled to a rebate if I am not occupying my Housing ACT property?

Not usually. However;

- you can be absent from the property for up to three (3) months and still receive a rebate if the absence is approved in writing by Housing ACT.
- where a household member enters residential rehabilitation, the full income of that person is excluded from rebate assessment for the duration of the residential stay.

Please note: Housing ACT does not allow the sub-letting of its public rental properties.

What happens if my income or household circumstances change?

If your household income or other circumstances change (eg. household composition) you must notify Housing ACT immediately as this may affect your rebate entitlement.



However, in most cases, where your income increases during the existing six (6) month period of approval your rebated rent will remain unchanged until the next review.

You should also contact Housing ACT if any household member commences employment as you may be eligible for an extension of your existing rebate approval period.

Date of effect of entitlement

A rent rebate ordinarily takes effect from the date the application is received or, in the case of an application for review of ongoing entitlement, the day after the expiry date of the existing rebate.

A new rebate will take effect from the date the complete application is received.

What happens to my rebate if I relocate to another Housing ACT property?

If you transfer, a rental rebate application must be submitted in respect of the new property.

Fraud

Housing ACT considers fraud to have occurred when a tenant, in order to gain a new or higher rental rebate:

- deliberately supplies false information; or
- deliberately fails to provide information on an Application for Rental Rebate and in documentation provided to substantiate the income of any member of their household.

Please remember to provide accurate information on your personal and financial circumstances – withholding information or giving false information may be an offence.

For additional information refer to:

- the Rental Rebates Policy
- the Market Rent Policy.

Review of Housing ACT decisions

Applicants may appeal decisions made by Housing ACT where there is new information or changed circumstances that could affect the original decision (see the 'Review of Decisions' Fact Sheet for more information).



There is an established review protocol that includes an initial internal review by Housing ACT and where appropriate, access to external review mechanisms.

Further Information

For more information, contact your Housing Manager or telephone the Community Services Directorate on 133427 or visit Gateway Services at:

Nature Conservation House
Cnr Emu Bank & Benjamin Way
Belconnen Town Centre
(Open 9:00am to 5:00pm Mon to Fri)

For more assistance on Housing ACT matters, please telephone 133 427.

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