

Document Name	Housing Eligibility Policy
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## Housing Eligibility Policy

### Context

Salvation Army Housing, Salvation Army Housing (Victoria) and Salvos Housing (together “SAH”) as Community Housing providers, predominantly offers Social Housing with Affordable Housing available in some States.

Both Social and Affordable housing is offered at reduced rent and is subject to varying eligibility criteria.

This policy explains the approach of SAH to eligibility for its housing programs in each State.

### Policy Statement

#### APPROACH TO ELIGIBILITY – GUIDING PRINCIPLES

SAH establishes eligibility criteria for available Long-term, Transitional and Crisis Housing (“Housing”) to fulfil its social mission to ensure that its housing is made available to relieve households from housing stress.

Accordingly, SAH will:

- only allocate Housing to eligible applicants;
- communicate clearly to applicants and the community as to who is eligible for Housing with SAH and the particular eligibility criteria that apply to particular programs; and
- comply with its contractual, legal and regulatory obligations relating to eligibility for Housing.

#### ELIGIBILITY - GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for social housing with SAH, an applicant must:

- meet the Housing Register eligibility criteria (refer below);
- have no previous significant debt with SAH or other housing agency that remains unpaid. The applicant can be accepted with minor rental debts or if the applicant agreed to repay the debt.
- In S.A., a tenant must be receiving support from a social, pastoral or medical support service and this service must be continued for six months from being housed.

#### *State based Housing Registers*

Each State has a common register or wait list for all applicants for public housing and community housing. SAH selects the majority of its social housing tenants from the relevant Housing Register.

Specific eligibility criteria apply in order to be accepted on the register. These criteria are established by State Government guidelines or legislation.

#### *Eligibility Criteria*

While exact details vary on a State by State basis eligibility criteria generally relate to:

- income eligibility;
- asset eligibility;
- proof of identity;

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- Australian Citizenship or permanent residency;
- State based residency;
- Needs test; and
- Access to a Commonwealth Health Care Card (preferred)

All Housing Registers have a priority categorisation system.

All applicants with a current Housing Register application are taken by SAH to have established that they meet the Housing Register eligibility criteria.

Applicants without a current Housing Register application can provide evidence to SAH that establishes they meet the Housing Register eligibility criteria. SAH will assist such applicants to make a Housing Register application either through referral to a suitable service or by assisting the applicant to lodge a Housing Register application.

#### **Eligibility for housing programs outside the scope of the Housing Register**

Where SAH owns or manages housing under programs that are outside the scope of the Housing Register, SAH will comply with specific contractual obligations concerning eligibility. This may include:

- Applying or electing to apply the general eligibility criteria as a generally accepted benchmark to establish that the applicant needs social housing; or
- apply some other reasonable eligibility criteria that is consistent with SAH's objects and purposes.

#### **ELIGIBILITY – PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS**

SAH has a number of rental housing programs where additional eligibility criteria to the general eligibility criteria apply. These program based criteria will be defined within individual agreements with Government, support or other agencies.

Some examples include programs designed for:

- those over 55 year old
- supported and supportive housing programs
- drug and alcohol recovery
- those escaping domestic violence

#### **ELIGIBILITY FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Affordable rental is offered on direct application to SAH, currently only in NSW and ACT.

Eligibility is based on the NSW Affordable Housing Guidelines with criteria based on factors including:

- on income,
- proof of identity
- Citizenship/ residency,
- ability to sustain a successful tenancy
- existing debts to Housing NSW or a community housing provider

SAH applies additional criteria that includes:

- generally, at least one household member must be engaged in regular employment
- applicants must be able to show a connection to the area of the property they are applying for
- applicants must not own a property

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Ongoing eligibility is reviewed annually with existing tenants able to earn 25% over the maximum income limit and remain eligible for the housing program.

## Scope

This policy applies with respect to all housing programs offered by SAH.

## Definitions

<b>Social Housing</b>	Short and long term rental housing for those on low incomes who need housing, especially those who have recently experienced homelessness, family violence or have other special needs.
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	Affordable housing is housing that is available to those on low to moderate incomes. Rents are set at a reduced rate to market rent in order to ensure people can afford to live in areas where they want to live and work.
<b>Long Term Housing</b>	Housing programs that are not time limited.
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	Short to medium term housing, coupled with Housing Support designed to provide the tenant with the skills necessary to identify, secure and maintain suitable Long term Housing as well as identifying and addressing any other contributory issues, e.g. substance misuse, family violence and mental health issues.
<b>Crisis Housing</b>	Short term supported accommodation (funded for an average stay of six weeks) for people in immediate crisis who require intensive support to stabilise their situation in order to determine further options
<b>Housing Register</b>	<p><b>Victoria:</b> Victorian Housing Register</p> <p><b>Tasmania:</b> Housing Register through Housing Connect</p> <p><b>WA:</b> Joint Wait List</p> <p><b>SA:</b> Community Housing Customer Register – ‘CHCR’</p> <p><b>ACT:</b> Housing A.C.T. Register</p> <p><b>NSW:</b> The NSW Housing Register</p> <p><b>QLD:</b> Queensland Housing Register</p>

## Related legislation, policies and or procedures

- DHHS Victorian Housing Register Operational Guidelines
- Eligible Persons criteria under the Homes Act 1935 (Tas)
- Housing Allocations Policy