

HOT21 Rent Management Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance on how YWCA Australia and housing subsidiaries (YWCA) are to manage rents fairly, efficiently and effectively.

This policy enables YWCA's housing subsidiaries to meet the following regulatory standards:

- The registered agency has policies and procedures which strive to sustain tenancies.
- The provider manages rent in accordance with the specific legal and policy requirements of each jurisdiction.
- The registered agency has policies and strategies to deliver housing services at affordable rents to low income tenants. The Registrar and registered agencies will monitor the extent to which rent charged is below 75% of market rent and between 25% and 30% of tenant income (in compliance with the current affordable rent parameters).
- Policies developed by the registered agency under the preceding paragraph detail the method of assessing affordability, the treatment of Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) in the assessment and the treatment of additional service charges if applicable.
- The registered agency has policies and strategies to deal with tenants in financial difficulties and with arrears of rent.
- The provider establishes and maintains arrangements that are adequate to ensure tenants and residents with support needs receive appropriate support, if relevant and where available, to maintain their tenancies.

Scope

This policy applies to all YWCA staff, contractors and volunteers involved in tenancy management (Employees).

The policy applies to both tenancy agreements and rooming house agreements. Unless stated otherwise, references to “tenants” include rooming house residents and references to “tenancies” include rooming house residencies. This policy covers:

- Payment options
- Information and rental statements
- Management of rental arrears
- Rent reviews

Policy Statement

YWCA tenants are informed at sign-up of their responsibility to pay rent on a fortnightly basis commencing from the first day of their tenancy.

YWCA provides a flexible rental payment system that is designed to maximize the ability of the tenant to maintain a successful tenancy. Tenants are offered choice in payment methods and these choices will be offered at the initial interview, at sign-up and at any time when the tenant may be facing rental payment difficulties.

Rent management will occur in an effective and efficient manner that ensures financial viability of the company. It will also be sympathetic to tenant needs and issues arising with non-payment of rent. The tenant will be offered a variety of payment options.

Rental statements will be provided on a regular basis and as requested by the tenant.

Rental arrears will be dealt with early to ensure that the tenant does not accumulate a large debt. These debts will be dealt with in a manner to sustain the tenancy. This does not mean that the arrears are allowed to accumulate but early intervention, following the legal process and implementing an agreed repayment agreement with appropriate referrals for support and advocacy is the aim to managing arrears.

Community Housing Officer's will follow the rent repayment policy. Changes to repayment agreements must be signed off by the National Housing Operations Manager. Repayments will not place the tenant in undue financial hardship.

YWCA will ensure that a timely and efficient rent collection system is maintained by receiving daily/weekly rental income bank statements. Deposits made by tenants will be detailed and processed from bank statements and/or Centrepay downloads in a timely manner.

In all circumstances where a tenant is having difficulty in managing their financial obligations, YWCA will refer the person to an appropriate support service. See also YWCA's Hardship Policy.

YWCA complies with the requirements of the relevant residential tenancies legislation. Where satisfactory arrangements for the repayment of arrears cannot be achieved, or such arrangements have broken down, YWCA may pursue legal action to obtain an order for repayments, and if the tenant doesn't comply with the Tribunal order, YWCA may issue a Notice to Vacate and commence eviction proceedings. YWCA will evict a tenant due to arrears only as a last resort, when all other reasonable options for satisfactory resolution have been exhausted.

Responsibilities

YWCA's National Housing Operations Manager has responsibility for ensuring that:

- this policy is implemented and its application monitored,
- the policy continues to comply with relevant legislation, and
- this policy is reviewed to evaluate its ongoing effectiveness.

Appendices

N/A

Related Information

YWCA	Procedure 1.2.5: Methods of Rental Collection and Arrears
YWCA	Procedure 1.2.5 A: Rent Setting
YWCA	Procedure 1.2.5 B: Rent Reviews
Legislation	Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic) Residential Tenancies Act 2000 (NT) Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 (Qld)
Standards	Housing Registrar (Vic): Performance Standards
Standards	NRSCH: Evidence Guidelines

Document Control Data	
Policy 1.2.5 Rent Management	
Responsible Officer	Director, National Housing
Accountable Officer	National Housing Operations Manager
Application	YWCA Employees involved in tenancy management
Supersedes	Policy 1.2.5 Rent Management and Procedure 1.2.5 Rent Management

Approval and Amendment history			
Review period – 2 years			
Approval Date	Version	Amendments	Next review
	1.0		[2 years]