HO51 Sustaining Tenancies Policy

1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance on how YWCA Australia and housing subsidiaries (YWCA) work to sustain all tenancies.

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 registered agency has policies and strategies to deal with renters in financial difficulties and with arrears of rent.*
* *The registered agency establishes and maintains arrangements that are adequate to ensure rentersand residents with support needs receive appropriate support, if relevant and where available, to maintain their tenancies.*

1. **Scope**

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

The policy applies to both residential rental agreements and rooming house agreements. Unless stated otherwise, references to “renters” include rooming house residents and references to “tenancies” include rooming house residencies.

1. **Definitions**

N/A

1. **Policy Statement**

YWCA is committed to sustaining tenancies. This commitment is based on the principle that rentershave access to the support needed to maintain and enjoy their tenancy.

YWCA has up-to-date policies, procedures and systems, including good working relationships with a range of key government and community agencies, and formal partnerships or agreements with particular support services, to ensure rentershave access to relevant support.

Employees deal with many disadvantaged and vulnerable renterswho require support, and staff are proactive in identifying if a tenancy may be at risk due to unmet support needs.

If an applicant to YWCA would need a high level of support to sustain their tenancy, a formal agreement with a support agency may be requested before allocation is approved.

If agreed, YWCA refers the renter to the appropriate support service(s) and, where necessary and practicable, supports the renter to access any referrals provided.

1. **Process Steps**
2. **Arranging support**
   1. If it becomes apparent during the tenancy that a renter needs support – for example, in the course of a property inspection, or in discussion about arrears, or following complaints –discuss a range of options with the renter and outline the support services available.
   2. Provide written documentation (if available) about each support service.
   3. If the renter indicates that they would like to access a support service, obtain written consent from the renter before making the referral. Add the written consent to the renter’s file.
   4. If needed, assist the renter with any referral form and/or making an appointment with the support service.
3. **Modifications**
   1. In the case of frail aged renters or renters that require modifications to their property due to a medical condition or disability, discuss the range of modifications and options with the renter and outline the support services available.
   2. Provide written documentation (if available) about each support service as well as the process involved in obtaining modifications to their property.
   3. Arrange referrals as per Step 1.
4. **Hardship**
   1. In circumstances where a renter is experiencing financial hardship, see YWCA’s **Hardship Policy**.
5. **Changing needs**
   1. If a renters needs have changed to the extent that the sustainability of their tenancy is at risk, discuss the options available to the renter. This may include consideration of other housing options, including internal transfer to another YWCA property.
   2. If needed, arrange referral to support services as per Step 1.
6. **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.

1. **Appendices**

N/A

1. **Related Information**

YWCA Hardship Policy

YWCA Antisocial Behaviour Policy

Legislation [Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)](http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/legis/vic/consol_act/rta1997207/)

Standards [Housing Registrar (Vic): Performance Standards](http://www.housingregistrar.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/publications/performance-standards-and-evidence-guidelines/current-performance-standards.pdf)

Standards [NRSCH: Evidence Guidelines](http://www.nrsch.gov.au/publications/nrsch-operational-guidelines/evidence-guidelines)

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| Document Control Data | |
| Policy Framework | |
| Responsible Body | Director, National Housing |
| Accountable Officer | National Housing Operations Manager |
| Transparency and Accessibility | This policy will be available on the website *https://www.ywcahousing.org.au/policies/* |
| Supersedes | N/A New policy |
| Application | YWCA Employees involved in tenancy management |

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| Review period – 2 years | | | |
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| 12/01/2021 | 1.0 |  | 2 years |
| 29/03/2021 | 1.1 | Rental Reforms | 2 years |