HO58 Temporary Absence Policy

1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance on how YWCA Australia and housing subsidiaries (YWCA) are to manage a renter’s temporary absences from their YWCA property.

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 renters and 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 and property maintenance (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**

***Temporary absence*** is when a renter is required to stay in temporary accommodation such as a nursing home, respite, rehabilitation, prison or remand for a period greater than three weeks and up to a maximum of 13 weeks.

1. **Policy Statement**

YWCA offers the renter a reduced rent when, in circumstances of temporary absence, the continued payment of the renter’s usual rent would cause them significant financial hardship.

Renters are required to notify YWCA as soon as the timing of their temporary absence is known. The notification and request for reduced rent must be in writing and be accompanied by documents that confirm date the renter entered (or will enter) the temporary accommodation, the length of stay and estimated date of return, and confirmation that they are paying a fee for accommodation costs (for respite, rehabilitation & nursing homes).

YWCA will assess the application and inform the renter of the outcome in writing. If approved, YWCA will reduce the weekly amount to be paid, to 25% of the total charge normally payable.

A reduced rental charge is not available for renters who are absent from the property due to holidays or travel. In exceptional circumstances, YWCA will consider an application from a renter who is absent from their property because they’re travelling but is unable to pay their usual rent due to unexpected financial circumstances. Such an application is assessed under YWCA’s *Hardship Policy*.

In all circumstances where a renter or applicant is having difficulty in managing their financial or other tenancy obligations, YWCA will refer the person to an appropriate support service.

1. **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

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 & property maintenance  |

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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 |