

Sustaining Tenancies Policy

1. Policy Statement

Uniting Vic.Tas (Uniting) provides tenancy and asset management services for community housing to Uniting Housing Victoria (Uniting Housing), a Registered Housing Provider.

This policy describes Uniting’s approach to sustaining tenancies.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Uniting Housing community housing tenancies which include, but are not limited to, tenancies in:

- Properties owned by Uniting Housing (Victoria) and Uniting Vic.Tas for use as long-term community housing
- Properties leased by Uniting Housing (Victoria) from Homes Victoria for long term community housing
- Rooming Houses
- Properties managed under the Transitional Housing Management (THM) program, the From Homelessness to a Home (H2H) program and the Homes for Families program; and
- Properties managed as Affordable Housing, including properties under the National Rental Affordability Scheme.

3. Guiding principles

In applying this policy Uniting will ensure:

- All renters are treated with compassion and sensitivity
- We focus on the individual needs and circumstances of renters and how their needs may change over time
- We use fair, consistent and accountable processes and renters are kept well informed about these processes
- We help renters understand their rights and responsibilities under their Residential Rental Agreement
- We are committed to responding to matters which may be family violence related in a manner that is trauma informed and aligns with the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM)
- We meet our contractual, legal, and regulatory duties and obligations.

In supporting renters to sustain their tenancies, Uniting will work proactively with renters through the following actions and strategies:

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- understanding and working with the individual needs of renters and their households
- ensuring that housing management policies, procedures and work practices are directed to sustaining tenancies and avoiding evictions into homelessness
- ensuring that renters are given clear information about their rights, responsibilities, rents and other charges, status of tenancy and how to provide feedback and make complaints and translate information for renters into other languages
- using allocation strategies to facilitate sustainable tenancies and work proactively with consumers to identify barriers to sustaining tenancies
- charging affordable rents, clearly explaining how rents are determined and using fair and transparent processes for reviewing rents and managing any rent arrears
- assisting renters with referrals to advice and support, where needed
- treating renters fairly in managing breaches of a renter’s responsibility under the rental agreement (such as rent arrears) and ensuring proper consideration of human rights is given throughout the management of breach processes.

Evictions would only occur as a last resort and would only be pursued when all other options and measures to sustain the tenancy have been exhausted.

Uniting acknowledges that the needs of renter households can change over time and will endeavour to meet changing needs within program guidelines, legislative requirements and available resources.

4. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Affordable housing	Rental housing where rent is charged at less than market level
Community housing	Rental housing owned and/or managed by a registered community housing provider
Eviction	Removal of renter from a property, as authorised by a Warrant of Possession issued by VCAT.
Residential Rental Agreement	Legal agreement between a rental provider (landlord) and renter (tenant) to rent a home
Sustainable tenancies	Where a renter is able to maintain their rental tenancy successfully as long as they wish to stay in the property

5. Transparency and accessibility

This policy will be available on the Uniting Housing and Uniting Vic. Tas websites.

If you require this policy in a language other than English, or in accessible format please contact Uniting.

This policy will be fully reviewed within 3 years of the approval date.

6. Legislation/Regulations

This policy implements the obligations of Uniting under:

- Housing Act 1983
- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
- Residential Tenancies Regulations 2021

7. Related Documents

Hardship Policy and Procedures
Eligibility and Allocations Policy and Procedures
Rent Policy and Procedures
Rent Arrears Policy and Procedures
Changing Needs Policy
Uniting Asset Management Policy

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