



Aboriginal Community Housing Rent Policy - Tenant FAQs

What is changing?

The NSW Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) is replacing the current Build & Grow Rent policy with the new *Aboriginal Community Housing Rent Policy* (ACHRP).

What is the Aboriginal Community Housing Rent Policy (ACHRP)?

The ACHRP is an income based rent setting model that aligns with community housing sector rent setting. It applies to all tenants who are renting an AHO property.

Why is this happening?

In 2018 the AHO launched its 10 year *Strong Family Strong Communities Strategy* (SFSC) to guide the AHO in delivering better housing outcomes for Aboriginal people. The new ACHRP delivers on one of AHO's commitments under Pillar 3 of SFSC – Grow the Sector. It also addresses a key IPART recommendation.

Under this policy all AHO tenants in AHO houses will pay the same rent regardless of who manages their house. This is important as the AHO sees fair and appropriate rent setting as vital in supporting the Aboriginal community housing sector to remain financially viable.

When will the change occur?

The aim is to have all housing providers that manage AHO properties transition to the new policy by the 31 December 2022.

What are the main changes?

Your rent will be calculated based on your Gross Household Income (GHI). If your GHI is under allowable thresholds, a subsidised rent based on 25% to 30% of GHI will apply. Where GHI is over the highest threshold, you will pay market rent. Thresholds are set by Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)

Your household rent will include 100% of the maximum Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) that your household is entitled to receive from Services Australia (Centrelink).

What is Commonwealth Rent Assistance?

Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) is a rent supplement provided by the Commonwealth Government which is paid through Services Australia (Centrelink) to help low income earners who are renting accommodation. People living in AHO properties are generally eligible to receive CRA from Centrelink.

How do I know if I am eligible for CRA?

You will need to contact Centrelink to enquire and apply for CRA if you are eligible

How is my rent determined?

Once the provider know your total GHI figure, it will be compared to the current household income limits. The AHO is adopting the same income threshold limits as DCJ to determine if you are eligible for rent subsidy.

If you are eligible for a subsidised rent your weekly rent payable = 25 to 30% of the total of your weekly GHI (ie the tenant, live-in partner regardless of age and those household members 21 years and older).

CRA is not taken into consideration when determining the subsidy eligibility.

Table 1 below shows the income limits for determining your subsidised rent

Household member	Weekly Income Allowance		
	• A: Lowest income limit or threshold = 25%	• B: Moderate income limit or threshold = 30%	• C: Subsidy eligibility limit = 30%
• First adult	• \$ 835	• \$1,044	• \$1,555
• Each additional adult	• \$ 220	• \$ 275	• \$ 415
• First child	• \$ 165	• \$ 206	• \$ 315
• Each additional child	• \$ 115	• \$ 144	• \$ 205
• Example: 2 adults, 2 children <18	• \$1,335	• \$1,669	• \$2,490

What is Gross Household income?

Gross Household Income (GHI) refers to the total amount of money earned before taxes and other deductions, just like annual salary, for all the people in the house that receive any income.

What is Market Rent?

Market rent comes from the NSW Sales and Rent data produced each quarter. This is the sole authoritative source of data on NSW rent movements.

Will the new policy affect the amount of rent I pay now?

The amount of rent you pay may be affected.

There will be transitional arrangements in place to make sure you are not excessively impacted by any changes to your rent.

You will get a letter to advise of any increase, decrease or no change to rent for next twelve months

What is the maximum rent I will be paying under this policy?

The maximum rent payable, including CRA, will not exceed market rent. The rent you pay is capped at 30% of gross household assessable income or at market rent whichever is lower.

What do I need to do?

The AHO rent calculator will have an interface to Services Australia (Centrelink). You will have the option to voluntarily opt-in to this service.

You will need to sign an authority form to allow for this interface to occur and provide your Centrelink number to your housing provider.

What does “opt in” mean?

This means your provider will be able to collect income from Centrelink. You will only have to advise about any changes to income earners in the house.

What happens if I do not choose to opt in to the interface with Centrelink?

If you do not choose to opt in you will need to complete and provide your income details to your housing provider every 12 months.

Who can I talk to about this change?

Contact your regional AHO representative

Western Region:

Shania McDonald Shania.Mcdonald@aho.nsw.gov.au

Northern Region:

Sharon Towns sharon.towns@aho.nsw.gov.au

Sydney South East Region

Kellie Ellis Kellie.Ellis@aho.nsw.gov.au

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