

Housing Reference Groups

Policy

Date effective: 31 January 2017

1. Purpose

Housing Reference Groups are situated in remote communities, town camps and community living areas as a primary engagement point for the Department of Housing and Community Development ('the Department'), to provide information on all public housing related activity in these areas.

2. Scope

This policy specifically relates to public housing applicants and tenants in remote communities, town camps and community living areas.

3. Policy

The Department consults advisory and reference groups called Housing Reference Groups, in remote communities, town camps and community living areas to ensure community and cultural issues are taken into account when making decisions regarding housing in these areas.

The Housing Reference Group is an advisory group and will not make final decisions on housing, this responsibility remains with the Department.

Housing Reference Groups are voluntary groups which provides the Department with a primary engagement point in remote communities, town camps and community living areas. The Housing Reference Group provide advice and recommendations on a range of issues to inform future programs, program implementation and policy development. The Department will also seek advice from the Housing Reference Group on social, cultural and local political issues that need to be considered in respect to housing.

It is a requirement that the Housing Reference Groups meet a minimum of four times per year, in compliance with overarching lease agreements between the Department and individual Land Councils.

3.1. Membership

The Department will work closely with Land Councils, remote communities, town camps and community living areas to appoint Housing Reference Group members.

The Housing Reference Group will consist of no fewer than four members. Membership on the Housing Reference Group is voluntary, with initial appointment for 12 months. Members will have a broad representation of traditional, family, social or special interest groups in these areas and have a mix of skills and cultural responsibilities.

3.2. Role of the Department

The Department will:

- take the lead role in establishing, facilitating and maintaining Housing Reference Groups;
- assist Housing Reference Group members to develop working arrangements for meetings, including a Terms of Reference;
- provide a secretariat role for Housing Reference Groups and cover the establishment and ongoing costs associated with Housing Reference Group meetings; and,
- take in to account the views, concerns recommendations and advice from Housing Reference Group members on housing and related matters.

3.3. Role of the HRG

The Housing Reference Group will:

- facilitate communications and discuss issues relating to permitted use, complex social and cultural issues related to management of public housing tenancies and delivery of services in these areas;
- consult with other agencies involved with capital / infrastructure work on communities; and
- provide advice and recommendations acceptance and allocation of housing applications in remote communities, town camps and community living areas.

3.4. Community Issues

The Housing Reference Group alert the Department to community issues which may affect housing outcomes. The Department seeks advice from the Housing Reference Group on repair priorities and programs of works, housing allocations, transfers, in particular suitability and strategies for difficult tenancies. Any individual member, or the group as a whole, may bring to the Department's attention any housing related issue that the Department may not be aware of that may impact on the tenancy or public housing services in the community.

4. References

Allocation and Commencement of a Tenancy policy

Eligibility for Public Housing policy

Tenancy Agreement Breach policy

Public Housing Transfers policy

Wait Lists policy

5. Document change control table

Release Date	Version Number	Approved by (position)	Section amended	Category
31/01/2017	1.01	Director Policy	all	Editorial amendments
March 2014	1.00	Executive Director, Housing Operational Client Support	all	New separate policy derived from Remote Public Housing Operational Policy Manual, Chapter 6