

Income and Assets

Policy

Date effective: 3 October 2016.

1. Policy Statement

To qualify for urban public housing, rental rebates and Bond Assistance; applicants, current tenants and all household residents aged 18 and over must meet income and assets limits established in this policy.

2. Purpose

This policy establishes requirements and limits for income and assets testing.

3. References

Entitlement policy

Identification and Documentation policy

Rental Rebate policy

4. Scope

Income and asset testing is part of the urban public housing eligibility test. It occurs:

- at the first application for public housing;
- shortly before a tenancy agreement is signed;
- for tenants in receipt of a rental rebate, periodically thereafter as part of the rebate assessment process; and
- a minimum of annually, to ensure continuing eligibility for public housing.

Income and assets testing is also applied to applications for Bond Assistance.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Front-line staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply policies and procedures in accordance with their delegated authority.
Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exercises discretion in decision making in the application of policy to complex or unique circumstances, in accordance with housing policies.

Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorised decision maker for exemptions from strict compliance with the Income and Assets policy.
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6. Policy details

Income and assets testing compares the number of people living in the household and the combined value of the household's income and assets against a pre-determined upper limit. Household income and assets must be below the upper limit identified for the number of household residents, to be eligible for public housing or rental rebates.

Misleading, false or deliberately omitted documentation is a failure to meet the criteria, and may also be a criminal offence.

Income and asset limits are set by the Minister for Housing and Community Development and reviewed annually. Current values are provided as an appendix to this policy.

6.1 Size of Household

This is calculated as the number of people who normally live in the household. Clients may have to provide documentation to prove the size of the household (such as marriage certificates and proof of custody documents). For more information, see the Entitlement policy and the Identification and Documentation policy.

The income and asset values are pre-calculated for households up to and including six people. In cases where the household is larger than six people the Director has discretion regarding the income limit to prevent the household from being disadvantaged.

6.2 Income

Income is calculated against a weekly limit. The amount is calculated as the weekly gross (pre-tax) earnings of all adult residents (aged 18 and over). It excludes income earned by children (residents aged under 18), as well as various government allowances. All adults in the household are required to provide proof of an independent source of income (such as Centrelink statements or pay slips).

An independent source of income is defined as wages or income that is equal to the minimum Centrelink primary income support allowance or pension, appropriate to the person's age and family circumstances. Eligibility for public housing cannot be determined and an application will be rejected, if any resident aged 18 or over cannot show evidence of an independent source of income.

Existing tenants applying for; or to renew a rental rebate, are referred to the Rental Rebate policy. The Rental Rebate policy details criteria and treatment of income for a household resident over the age of 18 who declares minimal or no income at rental rebate renewal.

6.3 Assets

An asset is any property or item of value owned by any household resident aged 18 and over, including those held outside Australia. An asset value is calculated as the net market value of the asset, which is the total market value of the asset less any money owed against the asset (such as a loan).

The asset value has a different limit for existing tenants who are over 55 years of age. See the income and assets test table appending this policy.

Assessable assets include:

- any cash or money at bank, building society or credit union, bonds, debentures, shares, property trusts, managed investments and income stream products;
- any assets you hold in superannuation and rollover funds if you are of age to realise the particular investment or are of Age Pension age;
- the value of any businesses including goodwill (where goodwill is shown on the balance sheet) or attributed value of a private trust or private company;
- the surrender value of life insurance policies;
- the value of any assets gifted or given away in the previous 5 year period, including transferring assets for less than market value;
- the value of any life interest or loans you have made to other people;
- the value of any boats, caravans or other recreational vehicles owned (such as quad bikes or jet skis);
- the value of any hobby or trading collections;
- liquid assets are any funds, including monies owed by your employer that are readily available to either you or your partner;
- compensation payments; and
- the value of any real estate and farms. Households with residents who own, or partly own any residential property in Australia will be ineligible for rental rebate and public housing. Any non-residential or uninhabitable property or land is considered an asset and the current market value must be provided by the client.

Non assessable assets are:

- the value of general household contents, personal effects; and
- personal vehicles or other transport eg: motorbike.

7. Document change control table

Release Date	Version Number	Approved by (position)	Section amended	Category
3/10/2016	5.00	Director Policy	appendix all	Revised Editorial amendments
7/01/2016	4.00	Chief Executive Officer	6.2	Revised
12/10/2015	3.00	Director Policy	appendix	Revised
17/11/2014	2.00	Chief Executive Officer	appendix	Revised
2/09/2013	1.00	Executive Director Housing Operational and Client Support	all	New separate policy derived from Housing Services Operational Policy Manual, Chapter 2.

INCOME AND ASSETS TEST POLICY - APPENDIX

Income and asset upper limits

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	GROSS HOUSEHOLD INCOME LIMIT *	HOUSEHOLD ASSET LIMIT ** - New applicants - Existing tenants under 55 years	HOUSEHOLD ASSET LIMIT ** - Existing tenants over 55 years	BOND ASSISTANCE ASSETS LIMIT
1	\$774 pw	\$54 057	\$194 396	\$5000
2	\$1006 pw	\$77 129	\$194 396	\$5000
3	\$1170 pw	\$122 158	\$273 509	\$5000
4	\$1343 pw	\$122 158	\$273 509	\$5000
5	\$1509 pw	\$122 158	\$273 509	\$5000
6	\$1679 pw	\$122 158	\$273 509	\$5000

* Income limits were last changed on 3 October 2016.

** Asset limits were last changed on 17 November 2014.